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THE INTERPRETATION
OF RELIGION

THE INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION

AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

BY

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"*Veritas potius emergit ex errore quam ex confusione*"

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IN CARAM MEMORIAM
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IUVENTAE MEAE SODALIUM

PETRI ROSS HUSBAND
CAECILII BARCLAY SIMPSON
PETRI BAILLIE

HOC OPUS QUALECUMQUE EST
D. D. D.

PREFACE

My primary purpose in preparing this book has been to set forth, to the best of my present ability, a true theory of religion. But I have also kept before myself the secondary purpose of offering to students the completest possible guidance through the winding labyrinths both of historical opinion and of contemporary literature on the subject. For my own mind the two aims have hardly been distinct from each other, because it has been in the course of reflection upon the thought of the past that my own views have for the most part taken shape.

I have prefaced my inquiry into the nature of religion by a somewhat elaborate discussion of the method which such an inquiry should properly employ. At the present time the student who is desirous of making a beginning with the study of religion finds himself in a most perplexing situation. For it would seem that instead of one way there are many ways of studying religion. Even in the old days, no doubt, there were two. You could approach religion (so the student was taught) either by the light of reason or by the light of revelation; and so you could study either Natural or Revealed Theology. If that distinction has now broken down, its place has been taken by a confusing variety of new ones. There is the old Systematic Theology which (together with its prefatory discipline of Apologetics) still securely holds its place in our theological colleges. There is the Philosophy of Religion, with its more secular and also more speculative associations. There is the new "Science of Religion," claiming to be built on broader foundations than either, as well as to make use of more 'scientific' ways of investigation. There is the equally new "Psychology of Religion," which at the moment seems to attract to itself a still greater number of interested inquirers. I have tried to guide the student to a right estimate of the justification of each of these approaches to the subject, and of their proper relation to one another; and have thus led him up to a point where they all become once more fused into a single comprehensive method of study.

Throughout the book I have made plentiful reference in footnotes to such recent literature bearing on the matter in hand as I had no occasion to mention in the text: and I have looked upon these footnotes as taking the place of a more formal bibliography.

What I have written is intended mainly for those who are minded to pursue the subject somewhat deeply. I have striven above all things to be lucid, but I fear that in so doing I have made my work too bare of other graces of style. Certainly I have always sacrificed the sound to the sense, wherever my limited powers rendered impossible the perfect marriage of the two. But it may not be out of place to mention that I have already published a little book[1] in which many of the conclusions here arrived at were presented in a way more likely to appeal to those who find the present discussion somewhat too severe.

The present work was put together at intervals between the Autumn of 1922 and the Spring of 1925, and while the years that have gone by since then have given opportunity for substantial revision, they have also made me more than usually sensible of the gulf between my endeavour and my achievement, and of the many directions in which even my own thought on these great matters is likely soon to carry me beyond the statement it here receives.

---

[1] *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul*, London and New York, 1926.

The defects of the book would, however, have been even greater than they are, had it not been for the skilled and generous help of four kind friends. My manuscript was carefully read by the Reverend Professor H. R. Mackintosh of New College, Edinburgh, and by my brother, the Reverend D. M. Baillie of Cupar-Fife, Scotland; and I have made the fullest use of their numerous suggestions and criticisms. The book has been read in galley slips by Mrs. John Dow of Toronto and by Professor J. Y. Campbell of Yale University, and has profited immensely from their expert assistance; while in pages it has once more been diligently read by my brother. To each of these my cordial thanks are due.

JOHN BAILLIE.

TORONTO, *September 1928.*

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PART I

THE METHOD

CHAPTER I

WHAT THEOLOGY IS

Theological science defined.

I

We are to be engaged in the following pages with the attempt to understand religion. We are to make religion the object of systematic scientific study. It is well known that this kind of study is a relatively late product of the evolution of the human mind, and that only a few peoples have indulged in it. Indeed we are almost certainly right in saying that there never had been anything genuinely worthy of the name of science in the world until it was introduced by the Greeks in the sixth century B. C., and there is no doubt at all that all the science that is in the Western world to-day is directly traceable to that beginning. "Rational science," says a distinguished historian, "is the creation of the Greeks, and we know when it began."[1] Among the phenomena which the Greeks made the object of systematic study may be mentioned those of number, figure, matter; the heavenly bodies, the weather; plant life, animal life, the parts of animals, the internal processes of animals; the human mind, the processes of reasoning, human conduct, civic or national life, music, poetry, religion. And so there came into being, among many others, far too numerous to be detailed here, the sciences of arithmetic, geometry, physics; astronomy, meteorology; botany, zoology, anatomy, physiology; psychology, logic, ethics, political science, musical theory, poetics, theology—all of which we still call by Greek names.

It is with theology alone that we are here concerned, for that was the name by which the Greeks, beginning with Aristotle in the middle of the fourth century B. C., designated the scientific study of religion. Theology may therefore be defined as *the science of religion*—the science, that is, which selects religion as its special object of study.

It is, however, necessary to make a further important distinction. The sciences which we have inherited from the Greeks are of two very different kinds. In the first place there is what we call *natural* science, that is to say, the science of nature; and by nature is here meant the environing complex of things which externally confronts the human mind. It was with this "Inquiry Concerning Nature," as they called it, that the Greeks began. But after about a hundred and fifty years there was opened up by Socrates a totally new vista of research, in that he turned aside from the study of nature to the study of "human things" (*ta anthrōpina*), or "the things of the soul" (*ta tēs psychēs*). How then are we to describe in English this second kind of science? Various qualifying adjectives have been proposed. Some writers have made the distinction as between the natural and the *philosophical* sciences; but that is plainly a confused way of speaking, for either philosophy is to be taken (as the Greeks took it) as merely another word for science in general or it is to be taken as a name for that coping-stone of scientific knowledge to which all the particular sciences stand in the same relation. Others have attempted to retain the word originally used in the Socratic school and have spoken of the *anthropological* sciences; but unfortunately the word anthropology has come to be falsely associated in our minds with what ought to be called "palæanthropology," that is, with the study of *primitive* human things, and not least with the purely natural science which studies the primitive human body. Still others have turned for guidance to the other Socratic phrase quoted above, which described the new study as being concerned with "the things of the soul," and have accordingly distinguished the natural from the *mental* sciences. In Germany they are now coming to make habitual use of the term *Geisteswissenschaften*—"the sciences of the spirit"; and that, if we could only find a convenient English equivalent for it, is perhaps the best name of all.

---

[1] J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, p. 4.

Theology, then, is to be reckoned along with psychology,[1] logic, epistemology, ethics, sociology, political theory, musical theory, etc., as a science not of nature but of spirit. Indeed, when Xenophon gives us a list of the "human things" to which his master Socrates was in the habit of devoting especial study, the very first thing he mentions is religion.[1] It would not be true to say that no attention had been paid to the problem of religion by the pre-Socratic scientists, any more than it would be true that these had paid no attention to the problems of politics and æsthetics. But the trouble was that before the time of Socrates and the Sophists the study of all such problems was vitiated by a strong naturalistic bias. The things of the spirit were treated merely as part of nature and were approached only from the point of view of natural science. And in the case of religion it was almost universally held by the early thinkers that they could explain the whole business of it by summarily identifying the gods of the populace with those ultimate physical elements into which they were now discovering the natural world to be resoluble. *Theos*, they said, is just *physis;* an equation which, in its Latin dress of *deus sive natura*, was destined, thanks to its reintroduction into post-Socratic thought by the Stoics, to have a long career in theological history. Socrates, however, firmly refused to have any part in this or any other attempt to prejudice the study of "human things" by introducing into it initial preconceptions derived from the study of nature.

---

[1] Some psychologists look upon psychology as a natural science, and *their* psychology may indeed be a natural science, that is to say, it may be based on such knowledge of the nature of mind as may be obtained by regarding mind *from the outside*, through the study of the brain and nervous system or of the external behaviour of the organism. There is, however, a psychology which offers us such a knowledge of the mind as can be gained only from within; and this is not a natural science.

Theology being thus classed as a *Geisteswissenschaft*, or science of spirit, it next becomes necessary to ask what is the main respect in which such sciences differ from natural science. The answer seems to be that in them we are approaching the objects of our research no longer from the outside but *from the inside.* Indeed it is possible that spirit should be regarded as no more than another name for the insideness of things and that, as has been well said,[2] "the soul of man is the universe turned outside in"; from which it would follow that, as so many celebrated philosophers have believed, there is nothing in the universe which would not, if only we could view it from within, turn out to be spiritual in nature. But however that may be, it is certain that what distinguishes studies like psychology, logic, ethics, and theology from studies like physiology, astronomy, and the other natural sciences is that in them the studying mind takes up its position within the phenomena it is studying. In the one case we have spirit investigating nature; in the other we have spirit investigating spirit.

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[1] *Memorabilia*, I. 1.

[2] By Dr. L. P. Jacks.

Another notable characteristic of the 'sciences of spirit,' very closely connected with this one, is the fact that in them there is an affinity, not present in the natural sciences, between the object of study and the study itself. Thus theology is said to be the science of religion; yet theology and religion are things not entirely different from one another, and no quite hard-and-fast line can be drawn between them. Similarly no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the moral consciousness, which is the subject-matter of ethics, and ethical theory itself; nor yet between the consciousness of beauty and æsthetical theory.

From these characteristics a further important consequence follows. The 'sciences of spirit' have as their object certain spiritual activities, such as the moral or the æsthetic or the religious consciousness. But these activities are themselves directed towards objects (direction towards an object being of the very nature of spirit) such as (in the three cases chosen) righteousness, beauty, God. And since the sciences of spirit take up their position *within* that spiritual consciousness which is the immediate object of their investigation, and regard themselves as sharers of that consciousness at the same time that they are students of it, it follows that the knowledge to which they attain is at once a knowledge of that consciousness and a knowledge of the objects of that consciousness. Thus ethics, at the same time that it is concerned with our moral consciousness, is also concerned with good and evil; and theology, at the same time that it is concerned with religion, is also concerned with God.

Should we then perhaps have defined theological science from the start not as the science of religion but as *the science of God?* This is a definition which has often been defended and which indeed can claim in its favour several centuries of unbroken tradition;[1] and it is also and very obviously the definition which is etymologically responsible for the formation of the word. Nevertheless there is more than one serious objection of scientific principle which can be urged against it. (1) To begin with, if we employed such a definition, we should be begging the very important question whether God and religion, though admitted by all to stand in the closest interrelationship, are yet wholly and in every respect conterminous. A number of distinguished modern thinkers, such as Sir J. R. Seeley and the late F. H. Bradley, have even taken the view that religion *need* not have anything at all to do with God, but may entirely centre round some other and lesser object of adoration; and while we shall in the sequel find it necessary to dissent from this view, we shall at the same time have to admit, with the large majority of modern students of primitive cultures, that religion is, historically regarded, a considerably older phenomenon than is the definite conception of deity. (2) But again, it would not commonly be held that God is at any time the *only* object of religious faith and religious feeling. Human immortality, for instance, is a very common object of both. Recognition of this evident fact has often led theologians to the very clumsy expedient of subdividing their theology, which they had begun by defining as the science of God, into a number of different doctrines of which the first was the doctrine of God, and others the doctrines of man, salvation, the future life, etc.; and they have even given to the first of these doctrines the same name of theology, distinguishing it in this sense of it from anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, etc.; a confused division which is clearly to be avoided, if at all possible. (3) More important still, however, is the doubt which cannot but arise in our minds as to the appropriateness of regarding God as a possible object of scientific investigation. We feel that it is not by science that we know God, but by religion, by faith; and that faith's way is the only way of knowing Him that is ever open to us. We feel that what the scientific student of theology, regarded as such, possesses in greater measure than the unlearned saint is not so much an understanding of God as an understanding of the nature of that act of religious knowledge in and through which God may be known. (4) Closely connected with this consideration is this other one: that theology appears to be concerned with God or the Supreme Being only in so far as He is conceived of as entering into a religious relationship with the human soul. There is a great deal of conceivable knowledge about the Supreme Being in which theology, even if it could attain to it, would not have the remotest interest; and the reason why it would not be interested is simply that such knowledge does not concern *religion*.

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[1] For a modern example, *vide* Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University*, II, 7: "What I mean by Theology is . . . simply the Science of God, or the truths we know about God put into system; just as we have a science of the stars and call it astronomy, or of the crust of the earth and call it geology."

Thus although we should insist that the scientific theologian, in having to do with the religious relationship, has at the same time and of necessity to do with whatever objects man is in that relationship found to be dealing with; and although we should allow that for most purposes it makes little difference whether we conceive of the theologian's business as being with the relationship itself or with what stands, as it were, at the further or Godward end of it; yet we find it no less necessary on the other hand to insist that it is only so far as these objects are known *through* the religious relationship that the theologian is properly concerned with them at all. It is, then, the boundaries of man's religious interest that mark the limits of the theologian's province; and it is for this reason that we prefer to define our study in the first instance as the science of religion.

This being the case, how does it come about that we are using for the name of our science a word which, regarded etymologically, means not the science of religion but the science of God? In answer we must point to two historical facts. The first of these facts is that our science was first given a definite name by a thinker who really did believe in the possibility of making the God of whom religion discourses the object of an independent scientific investigation; and who, in conducting this investigation, made no use whatever of any knowledge obtained through specifically religious channels of insight. This thinker was Aristotle. Socrates, in the line of whose philosophical tradition Aristotle stood, had been in the habit of defining the function of a science as the giving of a *logos*, or account, of a special set of phenomena. Socrates himself was not fond of compound technical terms; but Aristotle was, and he formed convenient names for many of the sciences by suffixing the root of this word *logos* to the roots of the words describing their several subject-matters. It is therefore he who is originally responsible for the use of the word 'theology' to designate our present study, and the phrase 'theological science' (*epistēmē theologikē*) makes its first appearance in his pages.[1] The other historical fact above referred to is that the name theology, after having long fallen into comparative disuse, was once again restored to currency by a group of thinkers who in some ways outrivalled even Aristotle in the boldness with which they reasserted the possibility of attaining to a knowledge of God in entire independence of such revelation of Him as comes by way of religious faith, namely, the scholastic doctors of the Middle Ages.[2]

Socrates himself, however, would probably not have allowed himself to speak of a science of God. He insisted on approaching every such investigation from the nearer or human end of it. He would have said with Pope, and indeed, if we are to trust the report of his disciple Xenophon, did say before Pope:

> "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
> The proper study of mankind is Man."

"He was the first," says Cicero, "who called philosophy down from the heavens to the earth."[3] In a famous passage in the *Phœdo* Plato makes him relate how he had once, in his youth, essayed an independent inquiry into the ultimate nature of things after the manner of the Ionian physicists, but had long ago given it up, and preferred now to examine the truth of existence only through men's existing conceptions of it. In this, he says, he is like a wise man who, in viewing an eclipse, does not blind himself by examining the sun directly, but looks at it only as reflected in water or some other medium; but he adds: "Perhaps my illustration is not entirely accurate, for I am not prepared to admit that he who examines existence through conceptions is dealing with mere reflections of it."[4] The result is that where we find Aristotle conducting a direct speculative inquiry into the nature of the Divine Being without making the slightest reference to the religious knowledge of Him (and indeed ignoring, except in one short paragraph, the very existence of religion in the world), we find Socrates contenting himself with the apparently much humbler task of trying to *understand what religion is*. To Socrates the immediate object of our science is thus not *Theos* or God but *eusebeia* or religion—though, as we have just seen, he believed that science, in obtaining an adequate knowledge of the latter, was at the same time obtaining a knowledge of the former which was more than merely reflected; and the aim of our science is said by him to be to give a *logos* of eusebeia, that is to give a scientific account of religion.[1] It may be noted in passing that during the remainder of classical antiquity theological treatises were called almost indifferently by the Socratic name, *Concerning Religion*, or the Aristotelian one, *Concerning God*.

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[1] Plato (*Republic*, 379) uses the word θεολογία, but not as the name of a branch of science; not, that is, as meaning ὁ περὶ θεοῦ λόγος in the Socratic sense, but rather as meaning τὰ περὶ θεῶν λεγόμενα in the popular sense of the stories about the gods.

[2] To be exact, the usage seems to have been reintroduced by Abelard. *Cf.* C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, pp. 16–17, 205–206.

[3] *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 4.

[4] *Phædo*, 99–100.

To our proposed definition of theology as the science of religion the objection has sometimes been taken that it imports into our inquiry, from the very beginning of it, a certain subjectivist bias which would be avoided if we thought of it rather as the science of God.[2] Obviously, however, this conclusion could only follow for those who believe religion to be a purely subjective experience without any element of objectivity in it at all. Whereas if we believe, as most of us doubtless do, that in religion we are really in communion with a Deity who is objectively real, then a phrase like "the religious consciousness" will have for us no more of a subjectivist connotation than has the phrase "the moral consciousness" for one who believes that in morality we have to do with an objectively valid standard of good and evil, or than has the phrase "the æsthetic consciousness" for one who believes that in art we have to do with an absolute beauty. One thing, however, *is* intended to be implied in our definition; in itself religion is a relationship or commerce between the human and the Divine, and our definition implies that it is proper for the theologian to remember that he can never stand save at the human end of this relationship and that he can have no knowledge of What stands at the Divine end save that which is given him in and through the relationship itself.

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[1] *Cf.* Plato, *Euthyphro*, *passim;* Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, I, 1.

[2] *Cf.*, *e. g.*, Emil Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube* (3d ed., 1923), part II, ch. I.

II

The problem of Theological science.

For one further step in the determination of our point of view as scientific theologians we cannot do better than follow the original guidance of Socrates. What exactly is meant by *understanding,* or giving account of, religion? Socrates' answer is a simple one, but it is in its simplicity that its genius lies. To understand a thing, he said, is just to know what it is. It follows that every scientific inquiry may be expressed in the form, What is it? and that the purpose of the inquiry is accomplished when we succeed in obtaining full and clear insight as to what the phenomenon in question really and essentially is. The essential aim of science may thus be said to be correct definition or description.

This is the view of its own nature with which science started long ago in Greece, and it is the view to which modern science is more and more returning. Yet during many intervening centuries it was displaced in the European tradition by another view according to which description constitutes only the preliminary part of science's task, its real business lying rather in the satisfactory *explanation* of the facts so described. The trouble with this view, however, is that it seems impossible to draw anything like a clear line of division between description on the one hand and explanation on the other. Of course if description be understood to mean a purely mechanical and perfunctory enumeration of the surface characteristics and appearances of a thing, then indeed it falls short of the beginnings of true explanation; but if, on the other hand, it be understood to mean as deep-going and penetrating an account of the essential nature of a thing as it is possible for human intelligence to reach, then it is difficult to see what further kind of explanation of the thing can ever be available to us.

It is worth our while to look into this matter a little more closely. If we press the question as to what kind of explanation of a phenomenon science can ever make available to us other than is included in an exact description of what it is that actually happens when the phenomenon takes place, a very common traditional answer would be that description means only knowing *how* it happens, whereas explanation means knowing *why* it happens. And if we further ask what is meant by this 'why,' the traditional answer would be that to know why a thing happens means to know its *cause*. It is, however, precisely this notion of causation that has recently been made the subject of so much criticism. Mr. Bertrand Russell, who is a real authority in this region, writes as follows:

> "The traditional conception of cause and effect is one which modern science shows to be fundamentally erroneous, and requiring to be replaced by a quite different notion, that of *laws of change*. In the traditional conception, a particular event *A* caused a particular event *B*, and by this it was implied that, given any event *B*, some earlier event *A* could be discovered which had a relation to it, such that (1) whenever it occurred, it was followed by *B;* (2) in this sequence there was something 'necessary,' not a mere *de facto* occurrence of *A* first and then *B*. . . . As a matter of fact, such sequences have not so far been found in nature."[1]

That is perhaps an overconfident way of speaking, but it is at any rate significant that in thus preferring to speak of the laws of change, rather than of the causes of events, we of the twentieth century are but reverting to the very earliest formulations with which science started on its way. Indeed the earliest Greek scientists put the matter more simply and excellently still, for what they said was that the task of science was to discover *physis*, which, being translated into English, means precisely "the way things grow" or "the way things change."[2] And it is much less confusing to speak of the way things change than to speak, as Mr. Russell does, of the *laws* of change; for law, like cause, is but a metaphor borrowed from our courts of human justice, and one which has been the source of hardly less trouble in the history of scientific thought.[3] Modern science, then, is coming more and more to think of its own procedure, not as an attempt to explain events by discovering their causes, but rather as an attempt to describe in the most intimate and accurate way possible what it is that actually happens when this or that event takes place.[1]

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[1] *Analysis of Mind*, pp. 93–94. I shall here set down also the following statement from Prof. R. B. Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 95; "Description means the reporting *of things as they are found*. The gradual substitution, in the procedure of science, of description for 'explanation' means simply that science has grown more rigorously empirical. 'Explanation,' as contrasted with description, suggests a reference to transexperiential powers, and mysterious essences, or a one-sided version of things in terms of human interests. Science has abandoned explanation in this sense, because such attempts diverted the attention from its proper subject-matter, and engaged it in irrelevant speculation."

[2] See the brilliant article by Prof. J. L. Myres on "The Background of Greek Science" in *The University of California Chronicle*, vol. XVI (1914).

[3] Associated in different ways with recent researches into the history of the scientific concept of law are the names of Ward, Eucken, and Boutroux. *Cf.* also Myres, *loc. cit.:* "More disastrous still was the replacement of νόμος by *lex*. The Greek word

We are to take it, then, that the question which any science raises with respect to its subject-matter is the question, What is it? The contribution of Socrates in this reference was twofold. He was the first thus to state the theory which had underlain Ionian scientific method since the time of Thales—and so was the founder of logic, which may be defined as the theory of scientific method. And he was also the first to put the *Geisteswissenschaften* on as sound a basis as the Ionian thinkers had already put natural science. "He used to inquire," we read in Xenophon, "concerning things pertaining to man, asking, What is piety, and what impiety? What is good, and what base? What is justice, and what injustice? What is self-control, and what passion? What is courage, and what cowardice? What is a state, and what a statesman? and so forth."[2] By raising the question 'What is the good?' Socrates founded the science of ethics. By raising the question 'What is a state?' he founded political science. By raising the question 'What is piety?' he founded the science of theology.

We are fortunate in having preserved to us in the earlier dialogues of Plato some account of the manner in which Socrates was wont to approach the answering of the more important of these questions. And, in particular, the question 'What is religion (or piety)?' is the subject of the little dialogue now known to

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describes a formulation of the way things actually happen; the Latin is a business term for a contract, binding them to happen so in the future, under sanction of some *religio*."

[1] This may be illustrated by means of a well-known example. When Newton 'explained' the fall of bodies towards the earth by formulating the law of gravitation, all he was really doing was describing what actually takes place more accurately than had previously been done. Common sense had long described it, carelessly and summarily, by saying that "all bodies tend to fall downward" or that "the earth has the property of attracting all other bodies towards it." Newton described the same set of phenomena by saying that any bit of matter attracts any other towards it with a force which varies directly according to the sum of their masses and inversely according to the square of the distance separating them. So of Newton's work in general it has been well said (by Kirchoff) that its aim was merely to "describe in the clearest and completest manner such motions as occur in nature."

[2] *Memorabilia*, I, 1.

[redacted]

us as the *Euthyphro,* though it was often known in antiquity by the title *Concerning Piety.* This very remarkable little masterpiece, which deserves our special attention as the earliest complete work now in our possession dealing with the scientific problem of religion, probably comes as near as do any of Plato's dialogues to reproducing an actual conversation in which his master once had part. Although the results, as was so usual in the Socratic conversations, are mainly of a negative character, serving rather to put out of court certain false views of religion than to establish the true one, they are hardly less valuable for that. Indeed the acuteness of the insight into the heart of the theological problem which is displayed by this earliest of theological treatises can hardly be exaggerated. What interests us at the moment, however, is the clarity with which it defines, and the consistency with which it maintains, the true method of inquiry.

We are then doing no more than following the very oldest tradition in this matter if we define the business of theological science as *the interrogation of the religious consciousness with a view to discovering what religion really is.* Socrates, it is true, would not have used a phrase like "the religious consciousness." Preferring simpler language, he speaks rather of "the conceptions men have about piety" or (to translate the same Greek words in a slightly more modern fashion) "men's religious judgments." But the two phrases are entirely identical in meaning. Just as the moral consciousness is but a general name for the moral judgments men make, and the æsthetic consciousness for their judgments of beauty, so is the religious consciousness but a general name for their judgments of religious faith. It is these judgments of faith which it is the business of theology to investigate. To a superficial view, indeed, they may seem to be little better than a haphazard and wildly discordant jumble of confused dreamings and imaginings. Not only are the faiths of different men and different races and different historical periods endlessly divergent from one another, but the faith of each single individual is itself an affair of almost infinite many-sidedness and complexity. On a casual glance religion may well seem to be not one thing but a bewildering diversity of things—sacrifice and sacrament, orgy and ecstasy and frenzied dance, prayer and praise, prophecy and miracle, ceremony and assembly, dogma and confession, and a thousand varieties of ritual and creed and institution. It is the business of science, here as everywhere, to see deeper, and to reduce the apparent chaos to something like order. Into what looks like confusion it seeks to bring system. Behind all the variety it seeks to discover a single central principle; and then, using this principle as an instrument of organisation, to set each separate detail in its proper relation to the other details and to the system as a whole.

III

The parallel nature of the ethical problem.

It may be conducive to clarity of thought if, in thus endeavouring to determine the point of view from which theological science should face its subject-matter, we keep somewhat steadily before us the conclusions long ago reached by a sister science which will generally be conceded to have attained a more unified and settled stage in its development than we can up to the present claim for our own study, namely, the science of ethics. The problem of ethics and the problem of theology may safely be assumed to be very parallel problems. There is no reason for supposing that the attitude of science to the phenomenon of faith should in any important respect be different from its attitude to the phenomenon of conscience, or that it is not essentially the same service which systematic reflection is able to render in each case.

A good simple presentation of the ethical method in use at the present time will be found in the late Professor Seth's *Ethical Principles*, and it will be worth our while to look into the account which is there given of the problem and point of view of ethical science. Here is what we read:

> "Its problem is the interpretation and explanation of our judgments of ethical value. . . . This task ethics seeks to accomplish by investigating the ultimate criterion or common measure of moral value, the true norm and standard of ethical appreciation."[1]

But may we not (remembering only the humbler connotation that we have recently come to give to the word 'explanation') use parallel language and say that the problem of theology is the interpretation and explanation of our judgments of religious faith, and that it seeks to accomplish this task by investigating the ultimate interior principles which inspire and regulate such faith, the true fountain and source of religious belief? Again we read:

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[1] *Op. cit.*, 5th ed., p. 37.

> "The search of ethics is for the organising principle of morality, for a principle which shall explain and co-ordinate all the changing forms of its historical development."[1]

To make this statement true of theology, need we do more than substitute the word religion for the word morality? And once more, just as Professor Seth urges that

> "the task of the ethical thinker is not to construct a system of rules for the conduct of life, but to lay bare the nerve of the moral life,"[2]

X so we should say that the task of theological science is not to construct a system of dogmas, but to lay bare the nerve of this thing which men call faith.

Professor Seth speaks of this view of the nature of his science as being a more limited one than is sometimes taken and than he himself had once taken.[3] It is, however, this more limited or humble view which has been responsible for nearly all the greater achievements which the history of the subject has to record. A noteworthy example is that true product of the Socratic method, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. Of this work it is sometimes said that it consists simply of a report of the ideas about morality current in Athens in Aristotle's time. This is no doubt an exaggeration, but it is at least plain that the general problem which Aristotle set before himself in the course of lectures which it represents was that of determining what our consciousness of moral value, at its best and clearest, does actually have to say. After a long period, marked too often by the barren application of more speculative methods, we find a very similar mode of approach in what is perhaps the one modern ethical work worthy to be placed beside the great masterpiece of the ancient world, namely, Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. For Kant's one question is, What does our moral consciousness really affirm? And the same is true of such English works as those of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Price, Reid, and Sidgwick. Theology, however, has been much slower to learn this Socratic humility, and has clung with a very persistent fondness to more speculative ways. Aristotle himself failed signally to apply to the study of religion that method of investigation which he had so successfully applied to the study of morals. In his course of lectures on "theological science," now known to us as the *Metaphysica*, he makes (as has been said) practically no reference at all to the actual religious judgments of mankind. Indeed he may almost be said to have achieved the feat of writing a book on theology without ever mentioning religion! And it was Aristotle who largely set the fashion which prevailed during the two thousand years which were to follow. Instead of asking (1) what exactly it is that religious faith asserts, and (2) what the actual grounds of its assertion seem to be, it became the habit (1) to assume without proof that a small select number of religious beliefs (usually those lying most ready to hand) constituted the real essence of religion, and (2) to proceed in search of independent speculative grounds for these beliefs.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] See preface to 5th ed. I would also refer the reader to John Handyside's *The Historical Method in Ethics* (1919)—a most suggestive essay.

The man who is generally regarded as having been the first clearly to realise the hopeless nature of this procedure is Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Schleiermacher's great service to theology may justly be viewed as a return, after the long reign of Aristotelianism, to the older Socratic standpoint; and in part it was a conscious return, for it is Schleiermacher who must also be regarded as the virtual founder of the modern historical study of the Greek thinkers. In his *Addresses on Religion*, published in 1799, we once more have a work devoted to answering the Socratic question, What is religion? And in his *magnum opus* on *The Christian Faith* he defines the objective of his science as the systematisation of the beliefs prevalent in a given church at a given time.[1] We shall presently, it is true, have occasion to criticise this definition as carrying the reaction against speculation beyond its just limits, but it is at least significant that what started modern theological science on its way was the reversion to so excessively humble a view of the theologian's task.

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[1] *Der christliche Glaube*, § 19.

Schleiermacher's own book is, ostensibly at least, no more than an attempt to "lay bare the nerve" of the Protestant Christian faith of his own day and fatherland; and that, undoubtedly, is too narrow an inquiry to satisfy our whole need. But we may unreservedly agree with a living theologian who defines our science (which, however, following the Hegelian fashion, he here calls "Philosophy of Religion") as "an attempt to understand Religion as it actually is, as it actually exists," and adds that "it is of first-rate importance that it should enter into the actual content of historical Religion, and exhibit it as the elaborated expression of the idea of Religion."[1]

IV

The nature of Theological Criticism.

All this does not mean, however, that the work of theology is not a work of *criticism*. Criticism is indeed of the very essence of the theologian's task. Intelligent description is always critical, in the sense of being selective and discriminative, distinguishing the essential from the accidental, the central from the peripheral, the permanent from the transitory, the more from the less developed, the more from the less typical. But it is very important that we should be clear in our minds as to the nature of the criticism which it is legitimate for the theologian to employ.

The first point to note is that the theologian's criticism of the facts before him must never be conducted *ab extra,* but always from within. The criterion of value which he employs must be one that is intrinsic to the sphere of experience which he is evaluating, and extracted from it. His business is not to bring to bear upon the religious consciousness the light of any outside knowledge or speculation, but rather to organise that consciousness in the light of its own interior principles. His criticism of it consists simply in allowing it to criticise itself. When, for instance, as will constantly happen, he is called upon to decide which of two religious systems is the 'higher,' or which of two rival doctrines is the 'truer,' his business is not to ask which of the two better consorts with our knowledge as a whole, or with knowledge obtained through extra-religious avenues of insight, but only to ask which of the two is more fully and truly expressive of that central faith for which all religion stands—and so, in the end, is more true to itself. All legitimate theological criticism consists in the determination of the *religious* adequacy of the ideas criticised.

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[1] C. C. J. Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, pp. 245–246.

And there is still another thing to be remembered. For when we say that it is the theologian's duty to make religion criticise itself, we must not forget that religion has all along been criticising itself. The historical evolution of religion is just another name for the progressive self-criticism to which religion has always subjected itself. It follows that what the theologian is called upon to do is not really to conduct an original and *de novo* criticism of the religious consciousness of our race, but rather to give clear account of the critical insights to which that consciousness has already attained. These insights have been slowly and laboriously hammered out of our racial experience through more centuries than can now be numbered, and the individual modern inquirer would indeed be in a sorry plight if, as he approached his task, they were not already in his secure possession. This does not mean, of course, that the theologian must accept these insights on the *authority* of the past: the whole point is rather that they are insights which he himself, as a religious subject and an heir of all the ages, actively shares. But it does mean that what we expect, at least in the first instance, to hear from the scientific theologian with regard to any great religious issue is not so much *what* the true settlement of the matter is, as *why* this particular settlement has been arrived at by the divinely guided wisdom of the race. We shall, for example, be deeply concerned in a later chapter with the question of polytheism and monotheism, yet the issue before us will certainly not be *whether* monotheism is superior to polytheism but only *why* it is superior; just as in a text-book of ethical science we should be much concerned with the wickedness of lying, yet should never be asking *whether* it is wrong to tell a lie, but only *why* it is wrong. The former questions are never open ones in the scientific classroom, nor are they questions concerning which the scientific student can hope to attain any greater degree of assurance than is available to the ordinary moral agent and religious worshipper. It is only concerning the latter questions, that is, concerning the nature of the grounds on which we, in common with the spiritual tradition to which we belong, have come to be assured of the unity of God and the wickedness of lying, that those of us who study moral and theological science can ever hope to be wiser than our fellows.

We must indeed be careful not to exclude any possible avenue by which new insight may come to us regarding the things of the spirit. There are countless issues of religious conviction which are still awaiting satisfactory settlement, and there is not one about which we can in strictness assume that it is settled, beyond the possibility of revision, for good and all. And it may very well be that the theologian may find himself in possession of some new light of divine knowledge by which he is able to produce the line of religious development, in regard to this or that particular issue, a little further than it had previously been drawn. We have already found occasion to note that no entirely rigid division can be made between the ordinary religious reflection of the race and the scientific activity of theology, and hence we may well have the feeling that nobody has a better right to suggest a revision of the traditional wisdom than he who has made it his special business to understand what that wisdom is. On the other hand, the distinction here in question, though it must not be made too sharp, can as little afford to be altogether ignored. The saint or prophet is one thing, and the scientific theologian is another. The former breaks new ground in religion, the latter sets in order ground already broken. And though the same man may be both prophet and scientist, and may thus be able (as he frequently has been able) to lead us on to new insights as well as to explain to us the rationale of insights already in our possession, yet we rightly feel that it is not as scientist that he has been able to render us this higher service, but rather as prophet and man of God. Moreover, when all is said, the great forward steps that have marked the history of human religion have not often been taken by the philosophically minded; on the contrary, the philosophically minded have constantly had trouble to keep pace with insights coming from other sources. The greatest of all advances—that which is marked by the coming of Christianity to the Western world—came not from the great philosophers of Græco-Roman civilisation but rather in spite of them; so that it took them generations and even centuries to assimilate it. And we have perhaps the feeling that the next great advance in religion is going to come not from the ranks of learned theology but from much humbler sources, and even from sources at which learned theology will at first be inclined to look askance; just as, in the parallel case, we may have the feeling that the ethical questions now principally awaiting solution (as, for instance, the difficult question of war and non-resistance or the hardly less difficult question of punishment) are going to be settled not in the classrooms of moral philosophy but by the slowly developing conscience of Christendom as a whole.

One frequent source of difficulty with regard to this whole matter is the prevalence of the confused distinction between the descriptive and the normative sciences. Now it is true that logic, ethics, æsthetics, and theology may justly be called normative sciences, but in this sense the opposite of 'normative' is not 'descriptive' but 'natural.' To say of a science that it is normative is not to imply that it is not descriptive, nor even (at least in the first place) that it is more than descriptive, but rather that the region of experience of which it is descriptive is itself concerned with norms. And the immediate business of science with respect to such a region of experience is simply to tell us what these norms are, and to explain to us how, in fact, they operate within that region; and not either to provide us with new norms or to operate the old ones to new ends. Thus the primary and immediate business of logic is to tell us how we think, not to tell us how to think; and the prime business of ethics is to explain conscience rather than to instruct it; and the prime business of æsthetics is to bring to light the hidden principles inspiring artistic appreciation and creation rather than to guide such appreciation and creation; and similarly the business of theology, regarded as a science like these others, is rather to bring to light the hidden grounds of our belief in the love and providence of God and in the immortality of the soul than to tell us *whether* we are to believe in these things.[1]

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[1] One of the first moderns to be clear on this, as on so many other important points, was Pascal. "Hence," says his biographer, "arose Pascal's intense dislike not only to metaphysical proofs of God but to scientific theology of every kind, [*i. e.*, as practised in his Cartesian time.] . . . Its enthusiasts supposed that logic held the key to all the great riddles of life. They supposed that it would tell them whether there

It is a further question, and one not altogether easy to answer in general terms, to what extent the normative sciences, besides describing to us how we do in fact use our norms, are themselves called upon to make independent use of these norms for our practical guidance. The view has sometimes been taken that it is no part at all of the function of the *Geisteswissenschaften* to give us practical guidance, their activity being always and exclusively of the nature of 'rationalisation' after the event. "Only one word more," says Hegel in a famous passage, "concerning the desire to teach the world what it ought to be. For such a purpose philosophy at least always comes too late. . . . The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering."[1] Similarly we are told by Mr. F. C. S. Schiller that he never succeeded, though he tried repeatedly, in getting the late Bernard Bosanquet to admit "unambiguously and consistently" that it was any part of the business of logic to tell us how we *ought* to think.[2] This, however, is an extreme position which might rightly make us wonder why we should study philosophy and *Geisteswissenschaft* at all; and it is the result of the attempt to conserve far too hard-and-fast a distinction between scientific inquiry and ordinary intelligent reflection; between logic and thinking; between ethical science and moral insight; between æsthetical theory and artistic appreciation; and between theology and religion. The true point on which to insist is rather that the clearer knowledge which these sciences do often give us concerning what we ought to be is of the kind that can come only as the result of first knowing what we actually are. And, this being recognised, we shall then perhaps be prepared to admit that the different sciences in question are not all of direct use for our practical guidance in just the same degree, and that the exact degree in which each is so useful is

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was a God, or whether Racine were a greater poet than Corneille, just as surely as it told them that the three angles of a triangle were together equal to two right angles. Pascal answered that logic could do nothing of the kind. It might help a man to explain why he liked 'Phèdre' better than the 'Cid'; it could not tell him which of the two was the better play. His judgment on that point would depend on an intuitive preference already in his mind; and the most logic could hope to do was to translate that intuitive preference into words." (Viscount St. Cyres, *Pascal*, p. 392.) 'Logic' in this passage of course means scientific reflection, not the science of logic.

[1] *Philosophy of Right*, tr. Dyde, p. 30.

[2] See *Psychology and the Sciences*, ed. W. Brown, p. 60.

a matter for special determination in each case, rather than for dogmatic general statement.

Finally it may be asked, What light has the science of theology to throw upon the ultimate truth of religion or (to put the same thing in other words) upon the validity of the religious consciousness as a whole? The question is one that demands a careful answer. On the one hand we must at all costs avoid speaking as if it were the mission of academic theology to provide practical religion with any kind of proof or buttress for its inmost convictions which it does not already of itself possess. The full assurance of faith was in the world long before science was born; just as was the knowledge of good and evil and the appreciation of beauty. To the prophets of Israel, to our Lord and his Apostles, the earliest mysteries of science were not yet disclosed; they had no science of religion but only religion itself; yet they were in possession of as firm and as solidly grounded a trust in God as any that we can ever hope to enjoy. Here, if anywhere, is a region in which the learned student of religious truth seems to be no whit better off than the most unlettered of the saints, a region in which it is neither wide erudition nor systematic logical thinking that can be of help to us, but only the deep and long experience of life itself. And if the experience of life has entirely failed to provide us with a ground of belief, then science must always remain impotent to help us.

> "Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
> Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum."[1]

As well look to a text-book of ethics to provide a man with a conscience, or to a text-book of musical theory to awaken a feeling for music in a man hitherto quite deaf to its charms, as look to the scientific discipline of theology to implant in our souls the original germ of faith in God!

The truth is that there is no source of religious insight and no ground of religious assurance open to the theologian other than those which have always been in the possession of living religion itself. Faith does not borrow its assurance from theological science but, on the contrary, communicates to that science an assurance which is natively its own. It is not because this or that religious man happens also to be a trained theologian that he possesses adequate grounds for believing in God, but rather because, besides and before being a trained theologian, he is also a religious man.[1] The inversion of this natural order of relationship between life and science, though it is a tendency which (as we shall soon have occasion to remark at length) has haunted the history of Western thought from a very early period, is nevertheless as obnoxious a form of intellectualism and as crude an 'Idol of the Theatre' as any that could be conceived.

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[1] Goethe, *Faust*, I.

But while it is thus completely wrong in principle to expect from the study of theology that it should either bring faith originally to birth in our souls or give it a securer grounding in them than it has in the souls of other men, yet on the other hand there is undoubtedly a real service which theology is able to render towards the establishment of faith in the world. For though it cannot provide religion with any new assurance of its truth, it can at least make plain the nature of the assurance which it already possesses. If it cannot *prove* the truth of religion, it can at least *exhibit* the truth of it. And who can have any doubt as to the solid value of such an exhibition? Who can fail to appreciate the added strength which may accrue to religion from the development within it of a proper scientific understanding of its own nature? In an age when every other department of our human experience is being subjected to the closest scientific scrutiny, the soul's faith in God cannot safely constitute the one exception. If religion does not use the new machinery of thought for the cultivation of its own field, then others will use that same machinery to turn its field into a wilderness. There is no doubt at all that the major part of the unbelief that now afflicts the world is due not to the total failure of the impulse to believe in God but rather to the inhibitive influence of what are really *false theologies*, false explanations of religion, overhastily arrived at by workers whose main concern was in other fields; and here a true theology may be of the very greatest service in clearing these quite unnecessary obstacles out of faith's way. Thus the scientific study of religious truth, however impotent it may be of itself actually to beget faith in the soul, may yet do much to insure that the seed of faith is given an unhindered opportunity of spontaneous growth. "It is true," said a famous observer, "that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."[1] It may be freely admitted that the most difficult obstacles which faith has to face are not these adventitious ones, but rather the hard and bitter facts of life itself—the facts of suffering and death, the apparent heedlessness and wastefulness and ruthlessness of nature. And it may also be admitted that these are neither obstacles which were in the first place suggested by science, nor obstacles which science has any special ability to overcome. Yet it can hardly be denied that the advent of natural science has brought even these old difficulties before us in a new and aggravated form, giving its own sinister underlining to our previous perception of nature's cruel ways. And experience seems to show that when our consciousness of nature has thus come to clothe itself in scientific dress, faith cannot successfully confront it without becoming likewise scientific, which is to say systematic and self-analytic. Faith itself may do battle with nature, but only scientific theology can do battle with naturalism.

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[1] Express insistence upon this important point is one of the excellences of Karl Heim's notable recent book, *Glaubensgewissheit* (3 Aufl. 1923). He says, for instance, this: "Eine Philosophie des Glaubens kann also nur das Ziel haben das theoretisch zu entfalten, was der schlichteste Mensch ohne alle Reflexion besitzt, der sich zum Dennoch des Glaubens durchgerungen hat." (p. III). Again, and more fully: "Sollte es also gelingen, eine Lösung der erkenntnistheoretischen Frage zu finden, von der aus Glaubensgewissheit möglich ist, so kann diese erkenntnistheoretische Anschauung nur der philosophische Ausdruck sein für das, was jeder schlichte Mensch erlebt, wenn er im Dunkel des Schicksals das sieghafte Gebet spricht: 'Dennoch bleibe ich stets an Dir.' Es ist nicht eine bestimmte Erkenntnistheorie, die dieses Gebet möglich macht. Das Verhältnis ist vielmehr umgekehrt. Jeder glaubende hat, wenn er die Anfechtung überwindet, den erkenntnistheoretischen Standpunkt, den wir suchen, in unreflektierter Form erreicht. Unsere Aufgabe kann nur die sein, theoretisch zu entfalten, was im Dennoch des Glaubens *im nuce* enthalten ist" (pp. 53–54).

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[1] Lord Bacon's essay *Of Atheism.*

The task is to become able to interpret Religion in the terms in use today.

CHAPTER II

THE RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO OTHER BRANCHES OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY

I Theology as a Special (Scien

IF the view which we have taken of the nature of the theological inquiry be correct, it will at once be seen that theology is to be regarded as one of what have come to be called the special sciences.

In order to understand what is meant by a 'special' science a certain knowledge of the history of thought is requisite. When Western science first came into being among the Ionians of the sixth century B. C., it was conceived as one indivisible whole, no part of which could profitably be studied apart from the rest. Science (*epistēmē*) and philosophy (*philosophia*) were used as synonymous terms to denote the whole body of the new knowledge, and neither word was ever employed in the plural number. The common aim of every scientist (*sive* philosopher) was to obtain such a synoptic view of the whole range of cosmic appearances and the whole course of cosmic evolution as would enable him to understand what that One Thing was which was undergoing this evolution and assuming these appearances. The Ionian sage was physicist primarily, but he was also, in his primitive way, chemist, zoologist, astronomer, mathematician, sociologist, political scientist, and theologian; and he was these all in one, it being his special desire to find common principles running through all the regions of experience there represented.

Now to anybody who, like these Ionians, had no past scientific experience to instruct him, this method of pursuing the scientific inquiry might easily appear to be the best. That is to say, it might easily seem to him that a man could not be a good chemist or a good zoologist unless he were also, and equally, astronomer and psychologist and moral scientist and theologian. That a certain element of true insight lies behind such a thought is perhaps not to be denied, but there is no question that on the whole history has given its verdict in a quite opposite direction. Indeed it very soon became clear that the chief malady from which Greek science was suffering was that of overhasty synthesis. The difficulty of the scientific problem was underestimated because the depth of the fissures which separate different regions of our experience from one another was not recognised. One example of this may be found in the fact that most of the pre-Socratics thought it possible, without any further ado, to identify the gods of religion with the quasi-chemical elements into which they resolved the physical world—water, air, fire, etc. Another example may be found in the strange (though in its own way wonderfully fruitful and influential) mixture of musical theory, medicine, and theology which is the philosophy of Pythagoras, and which is apparently based on the assumption that because it is the business of music to keep sounds in tune, and of medicine to keep the body in tune, and of religion to keep the soul in tune, the same essential principles of 'harmony' must be operative in all three spheres. The necessity of greater specialisation, or at least of greater concentration on particular problems in temporary abstraction from others, was perhaps for the first time recognised in Plato's Academy, and it is on the curriculum of studies followed in that school that Aristotle's final classification of the sciences (now at last spoken of in the plural) was mainly based. It still seems to have remained customary, however, for most teachers to teach, and for most pupils to study, every branch of science in turn; and whatever be the advantage of such a method, there is little doubt that it stood in the way of the development of empirical and experimental inquiry. It is, indeed, going much too far to say, as does a distinguished modern student of the history of scientific method, that "the Greeks formed a theory of the world before they had studied a single process accurately and in detail";[1] but it is undoubtedly true that the amount of specialised study which must be devoted to each sphere of experience before any attempt can be made at a synoptic view was greatly underestimated by all the Greek schools.

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[1] Alois Riehl, *Introduction to the Theory of Science and Metaphysics*, Eng. transl., p. 6.

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The Greek tradition remained dominant throughout the Middle Ages, the common aim of all the mediæval men of learning being the preservation of perfect harmony between all branches of knowledge; and it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that a definitely new era dawned. The advance which modern science has been able to make over Greek science, its great progenitor, has doubtless been due to a variety of causes, but prominent among these causes have certainly been its increased specialisation, its more empirical and inductive methods, and its greater distrust of easy syntheses. One way in which this change of attitude has expressed itself is in the gradual breaking away from the corporate body of general science or philosophy of nearly all the particular branches of inquiry which had originally gone to compose it. Ironically enough, the first branch to claim its independence in this way was that which originally had been the very centre and axis of the philosophical inquiry, namely, the investigation of nature. When Greek philosophy began, it was natural philosophy pure and simple, and all the early thinkers were primarily physicists; whereas nowadays there is probably no branch of knowledge whose right to independence seems so much a matter of course as natural philosophy—or, as we have recently (owing to the wide-spread appropriation of the word 'philosophy' to denote what Aristotle called 'First Science' or 'First Philosophy') come to prefer to call it, natural 'science.' The intention of a writer like Lord Bacon, however, was certainly not to separate out for this new treatment the study of external or corporeal nature, leaving the study of spiritual nature to be dealt with after the manner of the older tradition. What he had in mind was rather the introduction of the newer and more empirical method in every department of scientific or philosophical research, saving alone that of what he called revealed religion. "The Greek form of science," says the authority already quoted, "was supplanted by the modern form in the seventeenth century. This state of the case was fully recognised at the time."[1] Nevertheless a variety of causes (into which we cannot here stay to inquire) brought it about that the sciences of human or spiritual nature had to wait until the nineteenth century for their real emancipation. It is within living memory that psychology

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[1] Riehl, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

has been separated from the corporate body of philosophy and given the clear status of a special science. In the case of 'moral philosophy' (which for this very reason we now prefer to call 'ethics,' just as we prefer 'physics' to 'natural philosophy') we have already seen how the change comes between the second and third editions of a standard text-book like the late Professor Seth's. "Ethical method," Professor Seth now tells us, "is scientific, not metaphysical. The normative sciences are to be distinguished, no less than the natural sciences, from metaphysics or philosophy. . . ."[1] To some extent a similar change in point of view may be noted in the field of logic. Bernard Bosanquet, for instance, gave to his great work on logic, published in 1888, the subtitle of *The Morphology of Knowledge*—a phrase which strongly suggests that logic is to be thought of as a special science and that its aim is nothing but faithful description of the forms in which knowledge actually clothes itself. Finally, it may be said even of epistemology that there are many signs of its coming to be regarded as a specialised and empirical scientific inquiry.[2]

Theology has been among the last of the *Geisteswissenschaften* successfully to vindicate its claim thus to be granted the privilege of a special science, and to be allowed to investigate its own field of experience in an empirical way, unprejudiced either by results supposed to be obtained by other sciences or by any preconceptions deriving from general philosophy. And yet, curiously enough, it was among the first to put forward this claim. It is now a full century since Schleiermacher published the great work which is usually taken as inaugurating the modern period in theological study; and the real clue to its significance lies precisely in the fact that in it, for the first time, the methods of modern empirical science are applied to the investigation of the religious experience. The aim Schleiermacher sets before himself throughout is (as we have already noted) "the description of our religious consciousness" ("*Beschreibung unseres frommen Selbstbewusstseins*"), and his great concern is, as he says, to let religion speak for itself. That is to say, he conceives it to be the business of theology to inform us as to the real nature and extent of the knowledge with which religious insight claims to be able to furnish us and as to the exact grounds on which its claim seems actually to rest; and to do this without allowing our results to be influenced by any prior philosophical generalisations which we may have ventured to form. It is moreover an interesting fact that, in Germany at least, the new standpoint represented by Schleiermacher in theology has been an influence of the most potent kind, leading to the introduction of more empirical and less speculative methods into the sciences of human nature generally. No other single name has been so important in connection with the methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften* as that of Wilhelm Dilthey, and it is well known how Dilthey found in Schleiermacher his chief inspiration. The tradition started by Schleiermacher was mainly carried on in theology by the Ritschlian school, the last great representative of which was Wilhelm Herrmann, to whose classroom in Marburg there flocked in such large numbers two generations of English and American students. And there is no doubt that the key to the understanding of the Ritschlian standpoint, and to the appreciation of its vast formative influence in modern theology, lies in seeing that for Ritschl theology is a special science occupying a strictly limited field; just as it is certain that the real explanation of the quite extraordinary difficulty which English writers still find in making sense of Ritschl and understanding his historical importance (and especially the difficulty they find in appreciating what the Ritschlians say of the relation of theology to metaphysics[1]) is the greater persistence among us of a more speculative theological tradition. Symptomatic of such persistence is the fact that though we have almost entirely given up the terms natural philosophy and moral philosophy in favour of the terms physics and ethics, we still commonly refuse to follow the Ritschlians in substituting for the term philosophy of religion the less speculative-sounding term theology.

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[1] *Ethical Principles*, 5th ed., p. 31.

[2] *Cf.* the title of Bertrand Russell's book, *The Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*. *Cf.* also *Symbolism and Truth*, by Ralph M. Eaton (Harvard and Oxford University Presses, 1925), a very competent book which attempts to construct a purely "positive or descriptive theory of knowledge," "an examination of knowledge undertaken in the spirit of the laboratory" prior to the settlement of any metaphysical question. "Metaphysics," he says, "is the most troublesome intruder in the field of the theory of knowledge." *Cf.* further Prof. W. P. Montague's *Ways of Knowing* (1925), in which a conscious attempt is made to imitate in epistemology the method of inquiry so successfully applied to ethics in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*.

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[1] In such books as Ritschl's *Theologie und Metaphysik* and his *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, Band III, §§ 1–3, 28; and Herrmann's *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie* (1876) and *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit* (1879).

One of the objections which have been put forward by representatives of the older tradition against the attempt to treat theology as a special science is perhaps worthy of special mention. It is said that theology should not be regarded as a special or departmental study, because it does not deal, like physics, with a special part of reality, but is rather concerned with reality as a whole. Now it is of course true that in religion we are in a significant sense concerned with reality as a whole, and yet we are concerned with it only under one aspect and in one relation, namely, in its relation to the ultimate purpose and meaning of human life. There are many questions which might be raised about the ultimate constitution of reality with which religion is even less concerned than is physics. The real object of theological study is not ultimate reality in all its aspects, but only those aspects of ultimate reality which are approached by us through the religious consciousness; and the religious consciousness *is* a special side of our mental life and one which is constantly and notoriously entering into conflict with other sides of it. This fact is the sufficient ground for devoting separate and specialised study to the answering of the question, Whence does religious conviction derive and what are the particular things whereof it is convinced?

II

The Relation of Theology to the Other special sciences, Especially to natural science

It being established that theology is to be regarded as a special science, we must next inquire into its relation to the other special sciences. It is of course clear, to begin with, that each departmental investigation must be given the last word in the interpretation of its own set of facts. This does not mean, however, that the different sciences must exercise no influence on one another; for if they did not do so, scientific progress would be much slower than it has actually been. It has frequently happened among the biological sciences, for example, that one departmental inquiry has discovered some law of evolutionary process to be operative within its own sphere and that its sister sciences have then taken up this key-idea and found it to fit their own keyholes. Many a fruitful suggestion has in this way been passed on from the botanists to the zoologists or from the zoologists to the botanists. But what it is important to notice is that such mutual influence can only be in the nature of suggestion, or of hypothesis. A single law, for instance, may be true both of plant and of animal life, and it may be to the zoologists alone that the credit for its original discovery is due; yet it is not until the botanists, going to work again in the light of the suggestion thus coming to them from the study of another set of facts, actually find the suggested law to be true of their own facts also, that anybody has the right to affirm that it applies to the vegetable as well as to the animal kingdom. And if the independent study of plant life should seem to lead to an opposite conclusion, then *either* we must believe that we have here come upon a difference between animal and vegetable development, *or* we must wait until further study in one or other of the two regions leads to a resolution of the apparent anomaly.

It is in the light of such general considerations as these that we should think of the relation of theology to a department of scientific investigation with which it has often had strained relations, namely, natural science. Nobody could for a moment deny that natural science has greatly influenced theological discussion and has been directly instrumental in leading to what may fairly be called certain theological discoveries. To take only one (but a very obvious) example, the chapter on Creation in the average theological text-book of the present day is probably very different from what it would have been if the evolutionary view of the origin of species had never been mooted by the biologists. At the same time it is of the very greatest importance that we should be clear in our minds as to what exactly it is that has here taken place. The case is constantly misrepresented in such a way as to imply that all reasonable students of religious truth, on reading *The Origin of Species*, were bound to say to themselves: "Religion, indeed, has always affirmed a special creation, but natural science now affirms the contrary; and so religion must now perforce shift its ground, accommodating itself with the least possible ado to the necessities of the case."

That is no doubt what the theologians would have said if they had believed that religion had no peculiar source of insight of its own which was worthy to be placed beside that of inductive science. But what they actually did say was something very different. What actually happened was that *The Origin of Species* set the theologians thinking. They began to wonder whether they had really been right in supposing that faith had an essential interest—had *ever* had an essential interest—at stake in the belief that the human species owed its origin to a special creative act such as is described in the early chapters of *Genesis.* They began to wonder whether this belief was really a religious belief at all—whether, that is to say, it was in any sense a product of specifically religious insight. They began to ask whether it was not rather a piece of primitive natural science, with which religion had made a merely adventitious alliance in much the same way as certain forms of current religion are now hastening to ally themselves with evolutionism. And so they came to see that Special Creation is the view to which mankind has always been led when first it has tried to explain the facts of animal and vegetable life. Each species certainly appears at first sight to bear the marks of special design and separate manufacture; and, seeing that it took Western science more than two thousand years to think of any other explanation that could possibly cover the facts, it was natural that religion should not have hesitated to intertwine its own native insights with a view of the origin of things that seemed so securely settled. It was this fact that so long misled the theologians. Biology was at fault in so long assuming that separate manufacture was the only hypothesis that would explain the apparent distinctness of natural kinds. Theology was at fault in so long assuming that religion was essentially concerned with our bodily ancestry. Our own age has seen a discovery made in both fields, and both faults corrected. But one thing is undoubtedly true, namely, that it was the biological discovery which first led to the general recognition of the religious discovery.

We say the *general recognition* of the religious discovery. For the fact is that long before Charles Darwin and 1859 the conclusion was announced by certain leading students of religion that faith had no concern at all in the manner of the creation of our species. Immanuel Kant, as a natural scientist, largely shared the traditional pre-evolutionary view of the manner of creation; but there was no doctrine of creation in his *theology*. Those adaptations in the organic structure of animals which Darwin showed to be the result of natural selection, Kant was able to explain to himself in no other way than by attributing them, as had always been done, to direct contrivance and design;[1] yet he protested against using them to prove the existence of God. The reality of the God of religion, he urged, is in no way bound up with the question whether "an architect of the world" is or is not a necessary postulate of biology. Similarly, Schleiermacher is found eloquently pleading, as early as 1821, for a clearer recognition of the fact that faith has no concern at all with the manner of creation, but only with the assurance that behind all creation there is, somehow, God. There is indeed no better statement of the case available even in this post-Darwinian day than is contained in his chapter entitled *Description of the religious consciousness so far as it is concerned with the relation between the world and God.*[2]

It should be clear, then, that natural science has as little competence to force its conclusions upon theology as theology has to force its conclusions upon natural science. The most each can do is to suggest to the other certain doubts as to the correctness of some of its results. When an apparent conflict arises between the findings of the two, it is the duty of each to go back to its own set of facts and work over them afresh and, if necessary, again and again, in the hope that one or the other may in the end discover some error in its reasonings and the conflict be thus resolved. It is quite wrong in principle for the natural scientist who is also a religious man to incorporate into his science results which he has arrived at by religious insight or theological formulation alone, and to assume that these are scientifically correct even though the facts of his own specialised research seem to point in an opposite direction; and it is as wrong in principle for the theologian who has also some interest in natural science to incorporate into his theology, without further ado, results obtained from natural-scientific sources, and to assume these to be theologically satisfactory even though religious insight seems to point in an opposite direction. The spheres of theology and natural science must be treated as independent spheres, each having a characteristic source of insight of its own; and intellectual harmony cannot be attained by either giving way to the other in a spirit of easy compliance, but only by each continuing to work away at its own facts, in a spirit of patient scientific inquiry, until the causes of conflict are removed. In our own day theology is often as much in danger of falsifying and botching its own results (thereby distorting the true witness of faith) through over-anxiety to put itself in line with the momentary conclusions of natural science as in the Middle Ages natural science was in danger of 'cooking' its results in order to accommodate them to the current theological formulations. When natural science abides more faithfully by its task of informing us what we can learn about reality through the careful observation of natural processes, and when theology abides more faithfully by its task of informing us what exactly it is that faith is concerned to assert about reality, then we shall better know where we are; and perhaps we shall find that the two spheres have less to do with one another than the Middle Ages hoped or than the nineteenth century feared.

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[1] *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, ed. Cassirer (*Kants Werke*, Band III), p. 430; Meiklejohn's translation, p. 384.

[2] *Der christliche Glaube*, Erster Theil, Erster Abschnitt: "Beschreibung unseres frommen Selbstbewusstseins, sofern sich darin das Verhältniss zwischen der Welt und Gott ausdrükkt."

The relation of Theology to
III
general or metaphysical Philosoph

There remains the question of the relation of theology, as a special science, to what is left of the original corporate body of Science or Philosophy after the various special sciences have made good their independence of it. This residuum, where it is believed to exist at all, is currently called by a number of different names. Sometimes the word 'philosophy' is reserved for it alone, the word 'science' being left to the departmental inquiries—a usage which is, of course, quite modern and seems to go back no further than to the first quarter of the nineteenth century or thereabouts.[1] Other writers prefer the accidentally coined mediæval word 'metaphysics,' while some like better to speak of 'ontology.'

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[1] "The separation of philosophy and science, which has culminated in regarding them as antitheses, dates back no further than the period which in Germany followed Kant. Then for the first time the opinion arose that philosophy could be prosecuted without science and even in open contradiction with science. This antithesis of philosophy and science forms an isolated episode in the history of thought, which to-day appears to be more than a passing phenomenon only because it is so near us in time . . ." (Riehl, *op. cit.*, p. 12).

The question of the relation of this study, whatever we may choose to call it, to theology has proved to be a very thorny one and has given rise during the past two or three generations to a good deal of very futile and sometimes even ill-tempered disputation. We shall be wise not to go further into it than is absolutely necessary.

There is no doubt that one, and perhaps the main, reason why the question has proved to be such a thorny one is simply that there are hardly two metaphysicians who take the same view as to what metaphysics is—that is to say, as to what is left when the special sciences have made good their right of secession. The only reasonable way to discuss the relation of our science to metaphysics or philosophy is therefore to consider the relation of the theological inquiry to each of the various inquiries which are sometimes designated by these names.

(*A*) Kant,[1] Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and all the Ritschlians—which is to say the most influential leaders of modern theology—all understood metaphysics to mean (what, indeed, the name seems to suggest, if it suggests anything) an attempt so to extend the methods and operations of natural science as to make them yield reliable knowledge about the nature of the universe as a whole. And, taking metaphysics in this sense, they one and all declared without hesitation that theology had nothing at all to do with it, but relied for its content upon a wholly different source of insight. They were undoubtedly right. Whether or not any knowledge about the ultimate nature of things is to be reached by a speculative extension of the methods used in the physical sciences, nothing could be clearer than that it was not by any such means that the leaders of the world's religion—the prophets of Israel, Jesus and Paul, Socrates and Gautama—attained their assured knowledge of God. It is well known how Kant himself denied that by the contemplation of the natural world *any light at all* could be had about the ultimate meaning of things, and how he consequently held that metaphysics (in his sense of the word) was impossible. This question Schleiermacher did not particularly discuss, but confined himself to insisting that in any case theology had no concern with knowledge so obtained; and in this the Ritschlians followed him.

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[1] Kant also uses the word "metaphysics" in another and very different sense, thereby causing his readers no small confusion; but into that we need not go.

(*B*) It seems preferable, however—as it is in the English tradition more usual—to use the word philosophy in a wider sense, taking it to mean an attempt to gather together in a single synoptic view all the evidence as to the ultimate nature of existence which we are able to gain from any and every quarter. The special sciences, having hitherto been encouraged to do their work in temporary isolation from one another, are now regarded as bringing home their several sheaves of knowledge to a single threshing-floor where the measure of each is finally taken and all are gathered into one great harvest; the lost unity of *epistēmē* or *philosophia* being thus once more restored. The term metaphysics lends itself less readily to this meaning than does the term philosophy; but the latter may have so many other meanings that the compound phrases 'speculative philosophy' and 'synoptic philosophy' have been proposed by different writers for the designation of this final summing-up of all our knowledge of reality. The business of what he calls speculative philosophy is thus described by Dr. C. D. Broad, a leading philosopher of the Cambridge school, in his book on *Scientific Thought:* ✓

> "Its object is to take over the results of the various sciences, to add to them the results of the religious and ethical experiences of mankind, and then to reflect upon the whole. The hope is that, by this means, we may be able to reach some general conclusions as to the nature of the Universe, and as to our position and prospects in it."[1]

What, then, is the relation of theology to philosophy as thus understood? The answer, of course, is (though this Dr. Broad does not seem to see) that the religious experience of mankind may, like every other department of experience, be made the object of special scientific study prior to the attempt of speculative philosophy to incorporate it into a synoptic view of reality as a whole; and that theology is this study. Thus theology stands in precisely the same relation to philosophy as does any other special science; which is to say that *its task is one that is logically prior to the task of philosophy*. Two things are implied in this. It is implied, first, that it is wrong in principle for theology to start out with any philosophical preconceptions, or to make any use whatever in its own research of results previously arrived at by any system of speculative philosophy; for to do so would be to make the cart draw the horse and the arch support the pillars. It is implied, second, that speculative philosophy must accept the results of theology in the same way that it accepts the results of physics or biology or any other specialised study—which is to say, precisely as they are given to it, without revision and without reserve. This, of course, does not mean that the philosopher is bound to accept the results of any particular theologian; he need no more do that than he need accept the results of any particular physicist or biologist. He may, if he chooses, be his own theologian and his own physicist and biologist. What it means is only that he must endeavour to look the facts of religious experience, no less than the facts of matter and motion and of vegetable and animal life, squarely in the face in the spirit of empirical science, and must reach a definite conclusion as to their meaning, before he attempts to construct a general philosophy.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

Unfortunately this has not always been done. The view has far too often been taken that theology, instead of founding itself upon those sources of insight which are native to the religious consciousness as such, must rather wait until philosophy has more or less completed its task and must then build upon philosophy's results. On this view theology is nothing but applied philosophy, applied speculation. Such a view plainly amounts to a complete disqualification of the religious consciousness itself and of all the native sources of religious insight—philosophical speculation now being called in to do what has hitherto been done by faith.[1] The most effective way of puncturing this favourite bubble of superintellectualism is perhaps to point out how very obviously the determining factor in the formation of philosophical systems has again and again been the initial presence or absence of religious faith in the philosopher's heart.[2] The matter is important enough to excuse our looking into it in some detail, and we may set out from a very clear statement by the Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Edinburgh University:

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[1] *Cf. e. g.*, S. Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. II p. 342: "Religion leans on metaphysics for the justification of its indefeasible conviction of the reality of its object."

[2] The discovery of this fact was part of the intellectual conversion of the greatest man of letters of the later nineteenth century. Tolstoy writes: "However much privi-

> "Though philosophical systems vary indefinitely, they are reducible, broadly considered, to three main types. They are either idealist, or naturalistic, or sceptical. Under one or other of these three rubrics every philosophy can be brought; and at every period in which free discussion has been possible, we find the sum total of knowledge and experience being interpreted from these divergent points of view. The three types are, it would seem, perennial in the fluctuations of human thought."[1]

Scepticism we need not here specially consider, for (as Professor Kemp Smith goes on to say) it is not so much a special kind of philosophy as the denial that any philosophy is possible; but we may profitably raise the question as to what it is that has really caused the great division of all positive philosophers into the two camps of naturalism and idealism. What was it, ultimately, that put Leucippus, Epicurus, Hobbes, d'Holbach, and Mr. Russell into the one camp and Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Berkeley, and T. H. Green into the other? We submit that nothing had more to do with it than the initial weight they were willing to give to our ethico-religious insights. This is indeed virtually allowed by the writer quoted above:

> "The only basis upon which idealism can rest . . . is the contention that spiritual no less than intellectual criteria have an absolute validity."[2]

The evidence for idealism, he says again,

> "is to be obtained only through careful and exhaustive study of all that the human spirit has brought into existence, in the arts, in the moral, social, and religious spheres, as well as in science."[3]

Artistic and purely social insights, if they are allowed to have any say, will clearly contribute in a very important degree to

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leged science and philosophy may boast themselves, asserting that they are the guides and directors of man's mind—they are not the directors but the servants. A ready-made outlook on life is always supplied to science by religion; and science only works along the paths indicated to it by religion. Religion shows man the meaning of life, and science and philosophy apply this meaning to various sides of life." (*What I Believe*, ch. VII; Eng. transl. by Aylmer Maude, "World's Classics" Series, p. 235.)

[1] Norman Kemp Smith, *The Present Situation in Philosophy* (Edinburgh, 1919), p. 5.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

one's final philosophy, but it is not difficult to see how, if *religious* insight is once allowed to qualify, its contribution is likely straightway to dwarf all others. For religion, if it claims to do anything at all, claims to give us knowledge about the ultimate meaning and purpose of things as a whole; and that is the very knowledge which it is most important for philosophy to possess. One's final philosophy would thus seem to depend on nothing so much as upon whether one does or does not set out from a firmly established faith in the spiritual order.[1] We may support this conclusion by quoting a few pertinent sentences from Professor Kemp Smith's predecessor at Edinburgh—Professor Pringle-Pattison—who for more than a generation has stood in the vanguard of the idealistic movement in the English-speaking world. As early as 1897 we find him writing:

> "There is no such thing as a philosophy without assumptions. Every idealistic theory of the world has for its ultimate premise a logically unsupported judgment of value—a judgment which affirms an end of intrinsic worth, and accepts thereby a standard of unconditional obligation."[2]

And in his Gifford Lectures on *The Idea of God,* published twenty years later, an exactly similar account is given of the real foundations of idealism:

> "Familiar with values in our own experience, we feel it impossible to conceive anything devoid of value (such as an unconscious material system would be) as ultimately real or self-subsistent, in other words, as a whole, a *res completa.* It is this moral impossibility, I think, rather than the speculative impossibility of a world unperceived or unthought of, that is the driving power of the idealistic argument."[2]

And this is how he states his reasons for not being a materialist:

> "Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that such a theory is intellectually conceivable; it would still remain incredible, because it outrages the deepest convictions on which our life is built."[3]

It is true that not all idealistic philosophers have been so frank in admitting that the ultimate grounds on which their philosophy rests are of a definitely ethico-religious character; just as few naturalistic philosophers have been self-critical enough to realise that they have succeeded in disproving the truth of religion only because they have set out by disqualifying the kind of insight which could alone lead to a recognition of it. But we have recently learned to be more sceptical than we used to be of the accounts men themselves give of the reasons for their own beliefs, and to look rather for hidden, and often unacknowledged, grounds. Philosophers have often made a great show of basing their belief in God and in the eternal values on purely theoretical and 'disinterested' arguments to which religious faith supplies no premise; but perhaps even the reasons of philosophers are what the psycho-analysts call rationalisations—"defence-mechanisms" thrown up to hide their real motives, which they are anxious to "suppress" as hardly fit to appear in exclusive academic circles. Can we believe that the *real* grounds of Plato's belief in immortality had anything to do with the strangely tortuous and unconvincing arguments of the *Phœdo?* Can we believe that Aristotle's belief in God really rested on the pre-Copernican astronomy of the twelfth book of the *Metaphysica?* Or Descartes' on his famous "method"? Or Spinoza's on his imposing structure of geometrical philosophy? Or Berkeley's on his new analysis of sense-perception? It is difficult, surely, to escape the impression that these reasons are all reasons after the event and that, in the last resort, these thinkers had no other grounds for their belief than the simple faith that is given to all in whose hearts "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God"[1] We are accordingly safe in concluding that religious faith cannot be substantiated by appeal to any idealistic philosophy, because it is itself the ultimate source of all such philosophies; just as it cannot be discredited by appeal to any naturalistic philosophy, because no philosophy could be naturalistic which had not begun by discrediting it. And so we return to our original dictum that whereas theology has an all-important contribution to make to speculative philosophy, it cannot in the nature of the case turn to speculative philosophy for any help or guidance in the performance of its own task.

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[1] *Cf.* D. M. Baillie, "Philosophers and Theologians: an Irenicon," in the *Expositor* for July, 1923—a statement with which I am in substantial agreement.

[2] *Man's Place in the Cosmos,* p. vii.

[3] *The Idea of God,* p. 200.

[4] *Op. cit.,* p. 41.

(*C*) We now come to a third and very different way in which the task of general or metaphysical philosophy is sometimes conceived. It is pointed out that there are a number of fundamental concepts, and also a number of fundamental axiomatic beliefs, which are used in common by all the special sciences and are therefore not peculiar to any. It is natural that no one of the special sciences should regard the investigation of these concepts and beliefs as its own particular business, and that they should consequently be relegated to a separate discipline; and this discipline, it is said, is philosophy. Dr. Broad gives it the distinguishing name of 'critical philosophy,' and looks upon it as an inquiry separate from, but no less legitimate than, the 'speculative philosophy' of which we have been speaking. The task of critical philosophy he takes to be "the analysis and definition of our fundamental concepts, and the clear statement and resolute criticism of our fundamental beliefs," and he adds:

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[1] Romans 8 : 16.

> "It is obviously a necessary and a possible task, and it is not performed by any other science. The other sciences *use* the concepts and *assume* the beliefs: Critical Philosophy tries to analyse the former and to criticise the latter."[1]

In all this Dr. Broad is fundamentally Aristotelian. Aristotle too believed that what he calls *First* Science or *First* Philosophy (to distinguish it from the various special sciences or philosophies) consists of two parts—the investigation of the ultimate nature of reality as such, and the investigation of the fundamental principles on which all our thinking is based. Here is what he says:

> "We must state whether it belongs to one or to different sciences to inquire into the truths which are in mathematics called axioms, and into substance. Evidently the inquiry into these also belongs to one science, and that the science of the philosopher; for these truths hold good for everything that is, and not for some special genus apart from others. And all men use them. . . . And for this reason no one who is conducting a special inquiry tries to say anything about their truth or falsehood. . . . Evidently then the philosopher, who is studying the nature of all substance, must inquire also into the principles of syllogism."[2]

Is then 'critical philosophy' but another name for logic? Some would answer this question in the affirmative; and Mr. Bertrand Russell has told us that logic, understood as the attempt to formulate the most general characteristics of reality, is the essence of all philosophy.[1] What Dr. Broad (who has been largely influenced by Mr. Russell) says is that logic "is the most fundamental part of Critical Philosophy," dealing as it does "with the most general and pervasive of all concepts and with those fundamental beliefs which form the 'connective tissue' of all knowledge."[2] But he also believes that it is the business of critical philosophy to investigate the concepts peculiar to the sphere of ethics "like *good* and *bad, right* and *wrong, duty,* etc.," and he holds in consequence that "the greater part of ethics," instead of being a special science, is "simply a branch of Critical Philosophy." And he holds also that the most fundamental concepts which are peculiar to the region of physical science, like motion, space, matter, are not properly to be discussed by physical science itself, but only by critical philosophy.[3]

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[1] *Scientific Thought*, p. 18.

[2] *Metaphysica*, 1005; W. D. Ross' translation.

Now with all this we need not, as students of theology, very deeply concern ourselves; but there is one query which we cannot help putting. Is Dr. Broad right in thinking that the special scientist must leave to the general philosopher the discussion of even those fundamental concepts and beliefs which are *peculiar* to the region in which he is working? Is not such discussion much more properly the business of the special science itself? Is it not the trained physicist rather than the logician who is likely, in the end, to be able to tell us what space and matter and motion are? And indeed the impression we get from Dr. Broad's own book is that the often admirable insight which he gives us into these difficult matters is much more based on the discoveries of specialised physics than upon any kind of study which can be carried on in abstraction from specialised physics and called critical philosophy or logic. This impression, moreover, is in agreement with a more general impression which we cannot help having about the modern discussion of these matters as a whole, namely, that, like so many things before it, it is more and more being turned over from the philosophic to the scientific classrooms. Where once we listened to a Spinoza or a Berkeley or a Hegel, we now listen by preference to a Mach, an Einstein, a Whitehead, an Eddington. Or, if that is putting the difference too bluntly, it is at least true that the philosophy of nature is every day becoming more and more technically scientific in character. Similarly, we feel bound to ask whether Dr. Broad is right in denying to "the greater part of ethics" (including the investigation of the meaning of *good, right,* and *duty*) the right to be a special science, and relegating it to general philosophy. Surely it is to the special student of ethics, rather than to the critical philosopher as such, that we should go for a careful analysis of the meaning of such terms as these. Is not this, indeed, precisely the task which the moralist, as special student, has always particularly set before himself; and why should we say that he is not competent to fulfil it or that, if he does fulfil it, he is going over to another branch of learning?

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[1] *Our Knowledge of the External World*, ch. II.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

[3] *Loc. cit.*

The view that the special sciences are not only uninterested in the general problem of the formulation and verification of those concepts and principles which are common to all our thinking and are dealt with by logic in the traditional sense of the term, but are also incompetent to deal with the most fundamental of the *special* concepts and principles which are peculiar to themselves, and must accordingly leave the investigation of these to general philosophy—this view is so widely diffused in current thought, and has so critical a bearing on the standing of theology as a special science, that we must subject it to a more detailed examination. We may illustrate it from the position taken in the representative text-book of ethics already quoted from, Professor Seth's *Ethical Principles*. Professor Seth differs radically from Dr. Broad in that he believes ethics to be a special science, its method being "scientific, not metaphysical"; but he agrees with him in thinking that the ultimate special principles of all the special sciences (and therefore, on his view, of ethics) are subject to the final criticism of philosophy. In his own words:

> "The normative sciences are to be distinguished, no less than the natural sciences, from metaphysics or philosophy, whose problem is the determination of the ultimate or absolute validity of all judgments, whether they are judgments of fact or judgments of worth. Neither the natural nor the normative sciences deal with the question of their own ultimate validity. It is the function of metaphysics to act as critic of the sciences; the sciences do not criticise themselves. Each assumes the validity of its own standpoint, and of its own system of judgments."[1]

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[1] *Ethical Principles*, 5th ed, p. 32.

Such a doctrine, however, we believe to be wholly mistaken. As to the sciences not criticising themselves, surely it is precisely to such self-criticism that all scientific progress is due. It is true that certain sciences have often not been critical *enough* of their own powers or *sufficiently* aware of their own just limits; for science, like other products of human nature, may suffer from the malady that is vulgarly termed "swelled head." But all sciences *ought* to subject themselves to the most searching and deep-going criticism; and if there be any part of themselves of which they should be more critical than of the rest, that part is surely their general standpoint, their initial assumptions, their fundamental principles—for it is on these that everything else turns. And as a matter of fact, the history of thought seems to show that the special sciences have themselves been at least as vigilant in this respect as has been general philosophy on their behalf. On the whole it is true that general philosophy has tended to be very conservative, and even behindhand, in its conceptions of scientific view-points, while most of the really sweeping changes that have been made have come from the practising experimental scientists themselves.

The idea that the sciences do not actively concern themselves with the truth or validity of the judgments which they investigate, but merely "assume" such truth or validity, leaving it to metaphysics to determine whether they are right or wrong in this assumption—this idea is applied by Professor Seth to the case of ethics in the following manner:

> "The science of morality has a right to assume that man is a moral being, since his judgments about conduct imply the idea of morality. But whether this scientific assumption is finally valid or invalid, whether the moral judgments are trustworthy or illusory, and whether or not their validity implies the freedom of man as a moral being, are problems for metaphysics to solve."[1]

Yet it would be interesting to know how metaphysics proposes to solve them! What means has metaphysics at its disposal, which ethics has not, for arguing the question whether man is or is not "a moral being"? Surely if we were desirous of knowing whether this so-called assumption were true or false, it is to ethical science—to the Socratic study of the moral consciousness itself—that we should go, rather than to any kind of metaphysical speculation. And again, what possible means has metaphysics at its disposal, which ethics has not, for the decision of the question whether our "moral judgments are trustworthy or illusory"? Let us suppose, for instance, that some metaphysician felt himself able, in accordance with the freedom here allowed him, to demonstrate the illusory nature of our fundamental moral judgments; on what grounds could he do this? Surely not on the strength of some speculative theory which has set out by ignoring the facts of moral experience, but only on the strength of a deep-going critical examination of the moral consciousness itself. But *that* is precisely the task which scientific ethics sets before itself to perform. Thus it is only by turning moral scientist for the time being that the philosopher can hope to say anything worth listening to about the meaning of our moral judgments and the kind of validity attaching to them. No effective attack has ever been made on the moral consciousness (or on any region of our spirit's life) from outside. All those who have attacked it with any appearance of success have attacked it from within; that is to say, they have attacked it by analysing it, by putting it under the microscope, and so endeavouring to show it up for what, as it seems to them, it really is—a tissue of nonsense or of self-deception. Similarly, it is true that no effective defence of the moral consciousness has ever been made otherwise than by offering such a descriptive analysis of it as has at once revealed its deep and authentic roots in our rational nature; nobody has ever really been able to supply it with any external buttresses or to deduce its fundamental utterances from any speculative view of things which began by abstracting from them. The plain fact is, indeed, that the truth of our fundamental moral judgments neither needs nor is capable of any auxiliary defence; and the only reason which has led certain philosophers to question it is (if we may take leave to say so) that they have been but indifferent moral scientists, contenting themselves with shallow and hastily considered and undiscriminating accounts of our human consciousness of moral value. What they need is a conversation with Socrates about the meaning of goodness, or with Kant about the psychology of moral obligation.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.

In one respect, however, we must acknowledge an element of profound truth in what Professor Seth says. It is indeed true, as was pointed out at length in our first chapter, that the moral scientist's business is simply to understand the moral point of view, and not to provide himself with any assurance or proof of its validity; and it is also true that the moral scientist (if he be to any degree a fit member of society) begins by assuming its validity. But he assumes it not because he does not conceive it to be his particular business to prove it but rather because he does not feel that it is the sort of thing that needs, or is capable of, proof; and because, as an intelligent being, he finds himself unable to doubt it. It is therefore absurd to suggest that what ethics cannot do in this respect, metaphysics can do in its stead. Metaphysics is the last thing in the world to be able to provide the moralist with the assurance of the validity of the moral point of view. *Only his own moral consciousness can do that.* The moral point of view, in fact, is self-evidencing to all moral beings; and it is because he is a moral being, not because he is a scientist, that the moral scientist possesses assurance of its validity; and the assurance thus communicated from man as moral being to man as moral scientist is, in its turn, passed on, though now with a fuller and more logically coherent self-consciousness of its own nature, to general philosophy and metaphysics.

On this point there is no better guide than Aristotle. Aristotle, as we have seen, teaches that every science sets out from certain beliefs which it assumes to be true and does not attempt to prove. But he never suggests that it is the business of First Philosophy to *prove* them, still less to *criticise* them. On the contrary he holds that they are of such a nature as to be incapable of proof—or of disproof, and that it is only for that reason that the science in question is justified in taking them for granted. "How," he asks, "can there be a *science* of the first principles? For we are aware even now what each of them is."[1] That is to say, we need no science to assure us of the truth of first principles, for their truth is evident to every man on inspection, and (as he says) we become aware of them not by demonstrative science but by *Nous*—as we might say, by the direct intuition of our intelligent natures. It is true that Aristotle does consider it to be the business of First Philosophy to *defend* our fundamental beliefs against any objections which may be brought against them; but such defence can only consist in trying to bring home their self-evident character to those who, through some confusion of thought, incline to deny it—and has nothing to do with proof or disproof. It therefore seems clear that, in whatever sense it is true that ethical science is unable to assure us of the fundamental validity of the moral point of view, in that sense neither can metaphysics assure us of it, nor is assurance needed, because it is ours from the beginning.

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[1] *Metaphysica*, 997a.

All this may now be applied to the case of theology in a very few words. It is in a real sense true (as we saw at the end of Chapter I) that theology, considered as a science, has no special means of its own whereby it can demonstrate the fundamental validity of the religious consciousness and the fundamental truth of religious belief. In the end all it can do is to take over into itself the assurance which already and natively belongs to faith. And this assurance it passes on to metaphysics. It is therefore incompetent for metaphysics to attempt to throw any new light on the nature or degree of the validity attaching to the religious point of view; for it is, if we may so express it, one stage further removed than theological science itself from the only source of insight from which light on this greatest of all questions can be expected to come—the direct witness of the Spirit of God in the heart of man.

Our discussion of the relation of theology to philosophy is now at last ended. If it has seemed intricate and confusing, that (as we make bold to assert) is not owing to any uncertainty on our part concerning the task and method of theology, but rather to the amazing variety and confusion of current ideas concerning the task and method of philosophy. The one conclusion which clearly emerges is that, whatever be its real task, metaphysics, considered as such, can have no new and peculiar light of its own to throw upon the religious problem. It is a conclusion which many of our contemporaries have long ago reached in their own way. For the settlement of the deepest theological issues men are looking more and more, neither to high-flying metaphysical speculations nor to neatly finished metaphysical systems, but to the patient and (in the best sense of the word) empirical study of the religious consciousness itself.

CHAPTER III

THE SCOPE OF THEOLOGY

The Traditional View of Protestant Theology as to its own scope.

I

We have described the business of theology as the analytic and systematic presentation of religious belief. The question may, however, be put to us whether we should not rather say *Christian* belief—or, if any of us should happen to be Jews or Buddhists, whether we should not then say Jewish or Buddhist belief. It has indeed been suggested that there is in the world no such thing as religion but only a number of religions. And there is no doubt that the student of the spiritual life of mankind does at first sight seem to be confronted with a mere haphazard jumble of diverse religious systems, each standing for a different view of the meaning of life and the nature of the transcendent world, and seeming between them to exhaust every possible view that could be taken. So it has been felt by some that no such general science of religion as we have described is possible, it being unthinkable that we should ever succeed in finding any kind or degree of system in the religious consciousness of mankind as a whole. All we can do, they say, is to attempt to systematise the beliefs of our own 'religion'—which, to be sure, would not *be* our own, did we not hold it to be the one most (or alone) worthy of attention. Adherents of other religions may, of course, subject their own religious consciousness and that of their fellow-religionists to the same kind of analytic and systematic study as that to which we subject ours, and thus there may be a separate science of theology for every religion, and each may be fully adequate to its own special task. In some European universities, for instance, there are parallel schools of Protestant and Roman Catholic theology within the same precincts. If it be asked whether a single student (while adhering, of course, to only one religion, or perhaps to none at all) might possibly study in more than one of these schools, endeavouring in turn to systematise the religious consciousness of, let us say, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, our critics will be less unanimous in their answer. Some would hold that there can be small profit for the Christian student in making systematic study of the works of the devil, which is what the non-Christian faiths after all are. Others, more in touch with our modern ways of thinking, might claim that, while the faiths of the non-Christian world are indeed worthy of study, the Christian student should not study them as from within themselves, but rather in the light of their divergence from Christianity. Others, still more *illuminé,* would say that it is only from within, and by men who have in some degree shared them, that these other religions can be properly understood and interpreted, and that therefore the Christian student is, as such, disqualified from attempting the truly scientific study of any religion save his own. But all these would agree that, for the student who is a Christian, the scientific study of the *Christian* consciousness is a thing quite by itself and is what "theology" in the first place must mean.

This may be said to be the view of the matter which has traditionally been taken by Protestant theologians, and it is worth while noticing how it came about. As we have already learned, the great theologies of the Middle Ages were all attempts to combine into a single system all that was known, or could from any quarter be discovered, about God and the things of the soul. Two sources of knowledge were recognised and taken into account—speculative philosophy on the one hand, and the sacred writings and traditions of Christianity on the other. Non-Christian religion was believed to be but a farrago of delusion and error and was not dealt with at all except in so far as the accidental contact of the Western nations with the Jew or the Saracen made an occasional polemic necessary. With the Reformation, however, there came a certain change of emphasis. The Protestant Reformers tended, though in very various degrees, to be distrustful of natural theology, and to place greater proportionate emphasis on the light of Christian revelation; while at the same time they were no whit more receptive than the mediæval doctors to the idea that there might be some light of revelation in the non-Christian religions too. Thus it came about that the Protestant text-books of theology, while certainly less embarrassed than were the mediæval text-books with material of a purely speculative kind, were for that very reason conceived on a somewhat narrower basis. What the theologian now set before himself to do was not so much to inquire into the whole compass of truth, human and divine, as to state in orderly and systematic form the doctrines of the Christian religion as made known in the Christian revelation. The first text-book of Protestant theology was written by Melanchthon in 1521 and was called *Common Points in Matters Theological* (*Loci communes rerum theologicarum*). Calvin called his book, written fifteen years later, *Principles of the Christian Religion* (*Institutio religionis christianæ*). Later text-books were called either *Positive Theology* or *Systematic Theology;* and in English-speaking countries the latter term has persisted to this day. In other Protestant countries, however, the term *Dogmatic Theology* or *Dogmatics,* which first came into use in the seventeenth century, has become the more usual.[1] But in either case the ostensible aim of the study has been merely to throw Christian belief into more systematic form than that in which it is commonly found outside the schools. Moreover such systematic or dogmatic theology, though conceived thus narrowly, was traditionally regarded as covering the whole field of necessary study. It was only at a later date, when the influence of modern philosophical developments on the one hand and the bolder-growing claims of certain non-Christian religions on the other came to make themselves felt, that there was added a prefatory or appended study of "Christian Evidences," in which some attempt was made to go beyond the mere exposition of Scriptural doctrine by saying something in its defence. "Christian Evidences" soon became "Apologetics," but this was still conceived (as, of course, the name itself indicates) to be something of an appendage to theological study proper. Finally, under the pressure of new movements of thought, apologetics became broken up into "Philosophy of Religion" (a term somewhat rashly borrowed from the Hegelians) on the one hand and "Comparative Religion" (a term which bears upon it every mark of compromise) on the other. But still the central place was given to systematic theology, conceived essentially in the old way as an orderly statement of Christian belief.

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[1] Details are given in Julius Kaftan's *Dogmatik*, 5te Aufl., § 1.

II

The view of Schleiermach

The first Protestant theologian to whom the unsatisfactory and compromissary nature of such a result was in some degree evident was Schleiermacher. It will be instructive to have his view before us.

Schleiermacher follows the Protestant tradition in believing that a separate science of theology "must be formed in connection with every determinate mode of faith."[1] But he is remarkable as having thought out the implications of this position in a much more clear-minded and resolute way than had any of his predecessors. Following the continental custom, he uses the name "dogmatic theology" to denote what he takes to be the central theological discipline. Its object, he tells us, is to present in systematic form some one historical type or system of religious belief—the type, namely, which is peculiar to the religious community to which the student himself belongs. The object of *Christian* dogmatics would thus be the presentation in systematic form of the *Christian* faith. Unfortunately, however, the Christian faith is not, either at the present time or as seen in history, one faith but rather many faiths; and so the dogmatic theologian is immediately faced with the question as to which variety of Christian faith he is to set forth. Is it to be the original teaching of Jesus? Or the faith of the earliest Christian communities? Or of the Middle Ages? Or of his own modern time? Once more, is he to present the Christianity of the Eastern Church or of the Western? And if Western Christianity, is it to be Roman or Protestant? And if Protestant, is it to be the Protestantism of the Reformers or of to-day? And if of to-day, is it to be Lutheranism or High-Anglicanism or Methodism or Quakerism? Schleiermacher's answer is that the theologian's business must be with the Christianity of his own sect and his own time, his aim being faithfully to report the type of religion that is there represented. "Theology," he defines, "is the science which systematises the doctrine prevalent in a Christian Church at a given time"[1]; and he adds:

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[1] *Kurze Darstellung*, 2te Aufl., § 2.

> "This limitation to the doctrine of a *particular* church is not a universal characteristic, because Christianity has not always been divided into a number of communions definitely separated by diversity of doctrine. But for the present time this characteristic is indispensable, since, to speak only of the Western Church, a presentation suitable to Protestantism cannot possibly be the same for Catholics, there being no connection between the doctrines of the one and those of the other. A dogmatic presentation which set out to avoid having any conflict with either of the two parts, would lack ecclesiastical value for both in almost all individual propositions. That every presentation limits itself to the doctrine which exists *at a certain time* is certainly seldom expressly admitted, but it appears nevertheless self-evident, and the great number of dogmatic presentations which succeed one another can, for the most part, be explained in no other way." [2]

What Schleiermacher thus conceives himself to be doing in his own work on the *Christian Faith* is to be presenting an orderly exposition of the faith actually operative within German Protestantism in his own day, *i. e.*, a century or so ago.

The question might very naturally be raised whether we can even stop short with "a given sect at a given time." Can we assume that even within this very circumscribed area of discourse Christianity always means the same thing? Is there not a difference in the religion of different individuals even within the same sect and epoch? Schleiermacher's answer, however, seems to be that, whatever differences there may be in form of expression, the fundamental faith of all the members of a single religious fellowship at any given time is essentially the same. This answer is in keeping with Schleiermacher's characteristic doctrine that religion consists essentially in an experienced feeling, and that consequently the difference between one religious persuasion and another lies in the fact that it is based on a different experience, a different determination or variety (*eigenthümliche Abänderung*) of feeling. Since religion is also for Schleiermacher an essentially social phenomenon, this feeling is always conceived by him as being socially determined. Hence he takes it for granted that the faith of any single Christian communion at any one period is based on a common religious experience and is therefore capable of being systematised by reference to that common experience; and his reason for saying that there is no "connection" or "continuity" (*kein Zusammenhang*) between the creeds of different communions is that he believes them to be the fruits of characteristically different religious experiences.

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[1] *Der christliche Glaube* (1st ed.), § 1. Many of my quotations from this work are from the translation of D. M. Baillie (*The Christian Faith in Outline*, Edinburgh, W. F. Henderson, 1922).

[2] *Op. cit.* (2nd and subsequent eds.), § 19.

What Schleiermacher now clearly sees is that, if its task is to be conceived in this way, dogmatic theology must be a purely historical study. It is, he says, a branch of historical theology. Is there then any theology which is not historical? According to Schleiermacher there is such a theology, and he calls it, following a precedent that was just then beginning to be fashionable in Protestant circles, "philosophical theology." Of this philosophical theology he did not treat in any of his published works, but from the *Brief Outline of Theological Study* which he prepared for his students we know what he meant by it and how very small a scope he assigned to it. He seems indeed virtually to have confined it to the critical determination of the historical relationship in which the faith of one's own communion stands to that of other communions. It is, he says, (if no longer mere history, yet) a branch of "historical criticism," the object of which is to "compare that which, in Christianity, is historically given with all the ways in which it is possible for religious communities to be different from one another."[1] And he goes so far as to add that "as often as Christianity divides itself into a plurality of ecclesiastical communions, all of which nevertheless lay claim to the common name of Christian, the same problems arise with regard to them also; and there is then further, in addition to the *general*, for every one of these also a *special*, philosophical theology. . . . *Our* special philosophical theology, therefore, is Protestant in character."[2]

Three things are worthy of note about this position. First, that the task of theology is regarded as being essentially historiographic in character, its aim being to bring in a true and orderly report of such beliefs as are actually held; secondly, that such a report is regarded as necessarily being made *from the inside*—that is, by one who shares the system of belief reported; and thirdly, that one must accordingly confine one's report to the beliefs of one's own sect and epoch, though one may go on to the secondary business of a historico-critical comparison of one's own faith with other faiths.

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[1] *Kurze Darstellung*, §§ 27, 32.

[2] *Ibid.*, § 36.

One result of Schleiermacher's influence has been that while in the later Middle Ages the term Theology was used without qualification, and while in the Protestantism of Schleiermacher's time only the qualification of "Christian" was commonly added, it has of recent years been a comparatively common thing, in Germany and Switzerland and Protestant France, to find the books and lecture courses which cover this same ground entitled rather *Protestantische Dogmatik, La dogmatique protestante.*

III The Ritschlian View.

From Schleiermacher let us now pass to Ritschl. Ritschl follows Schleiermacher in insisting that the theologian must take up his standpoint "within the faith of the religious community" of which he is a member, and he is even more emphatic than was Schleiermacher in insisting that he must never allow his attention to wander beyond the bounds of that community's faith. Like Luther, he entirely discards all "natural theology," and from beginning to end he maintains his standpoint strictly within the circle of distinctively Christian truth. He will have none of that "philosophical theology" which, to be sure, seemed in Schleiermacher's scheme to be little more than an appendage. "Philosophy of religion" is anathema to him, and so also are "Christian evidences" and "apologetics"; and "comparative religion" he evidently believes to be a not very fruitful study. Thus dogmatic theology, understood in the strictest sense, is the be-all and the end-all of theological study for Ritschl. "The immediate object of theological cognition," he writes, "is the community's faith."[1] And he takes essentially Schleiermacher's view as to what the theologian's task is with reference to the faith of his community: it is to bring in an accurate, coherent, and discriminating *report* of it.

Where he differs from Schleiermacher is in the fact that he apparently does not think it necessary to limit the field of the Christian theologian to the doctrines of "a particular Christian Church at a given time." For Ritschl there is, in every deep and true sense of the word, only one Christian Church, and it is a Church which, as regards the deepest things in its faith and life, has always been the same. Therefore, although Schleiermacher and Ritschl are at one in urging that the theologian's standpoint must be taken "within the community" of which he is a member, and that he can never properly concern himself with anything outwith the bounds of that community, yet by "community" (*Gemeinschaft*) the former means a particular sect at a given period, while the latter means the Christian Church throughout all the ages. There is at bottom, according to Ritschl, but one Christian faith, recognisable behind all the differences that divide the sects, and having its fixed norm of reference in the New Testament writings. "The theology which aims at exhibiting the authentic intellectual content of Christianity in scientific form must collect it from the books of the New Testament and from no other source."[1] The Ritschlian theologians thus take up their theological standpoint outside and above the distinction of Roman and Protestant Christianity, and endeavour to find in the faith common to both communions a fundamental principle which may serve as a touchstone for the adjudication of the points at issue between them; and they are all concerned to show, by reference to this principle and touchstone, that Catholicism is not merely contrary to Protestantism, but contrary to its own inward nature, contrary to its best self.

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[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, dritter Band, Eng. transl., p. 3.

More satisfactory than Ritschl's own very perfunctory statements on this matter are the much fuller and clearer deliverances of his disciple, Herrmann. The main difference between the two is perhaps that Herrmann's outlook is considerably less biblicistic than Ritschl's. He is inclined to lay less stress on the normative character of the written records, and more stress on the recognisability of the common Christian experience shared alike by ourselves to-day and the New Testament writers long ago. But he is in full agreement with his master in believing that the theologian who is a Christian must begin by taking his stand within the circle of definitely Christian belief and can have nothing to do with any faith that is not distinctively Christian. For him the business of theology is still to report on that Christian faith and experience which is always and everywhere the same and which is generically, and from the bottom up, a different thing from all non-Christian faith and experience.

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[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, zweiter Band, § 3.

This view Herrmann is not afraid to push to its extremest limits. He insists that the faith of Christians is altogether grounded in an experience mediated through the historical Jesus. "Jesus alone makes us certain of the living God," and is for us "the only revelation."[1] If others, who are not Christians, have believed in God, it must therefore have been on grounds very different from ours. Herrmann applies this principle to the Old Testament religion with hardly less boldness than to any pagan cult. A Christian's grounds for belief, he would seem to say, are one thing; an Israelite's another; and that is all that there is to be said. Here is a typical passage:

> "There has arisen a bad practice now widely spread among us. When the question is asked: 'On what depends our certainty of a living God who works in us?' it is quite a common practice to look away from ourselves and our own particular position, and to think of as many men as possible, who stand at the greatest possible distance from us, such as the savages of New Holland or the ancient Egyptians. None of these, it is urged, have been utterly without the capacity for recognising God, as indeed the apostle Paul testifies. We are also further reminded that Israel had the knowledge of God and enjoyed communion with Him before Christ came, and therefore it is finally concluded that what was possible to the Jews must also be possible to us. Such arguments are frequently set up in contradiction of our proposition that for us Jesus is the revelation of God. And then that proposition of ours looks like an exaggeration. It seems as though, in order to reduce it to its right proportions, we ought rather to say that we may have the revelation of the being of God quite apart from Jesus, but that Jesus makes some addition to that revelation, as, for example, the knowledge that God has a Son and constitutes one Being with Him.
>
> "Now to all this we may reply that we by no means wish to assert, even for a moment, that the savages of New Holland have no knowledge of God, no pulsations of true religion, and therefore no communion with God. But we do not know through what medium such knowledge and such communion reach them. We cannot enter fully into the religious life even of a pious Israelite, for the facts which worked upon them as revelations of God have no longer this force for us. . . . We stand in such historical relationships that Jesus Christ alone can be grasped by us as the fact in which God so reveals Himself to us that everything that hides Him from us vanishes away."[2]

It is true that certain members of the Ritschlian school, like

[1] *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., 3d ed., p. 61.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 61–63.

Kaftan, have been willing (as Herrmann was not willing) to allow a certain place for an independent discipline of apologetics alongside theology proper. But the place they allow it is at best a very minor and restricted one—the place of an *hors-d'œuvre,* never that of a *pièce de résistance.* And Kaftan's definition of dogmatic theology itself is strictly Ritschlian:

> "The true central task of Protestant dogmatics consists in setting forth the knowledge which accrues to faith from the appropriation of the revelation of God borne witness to by Scripture. In the fulfilment of this task dogmatics is wholly determined by Scripture and ecclesiastical confession. . . . That its task should be thus and not otherwise understood is not only a theological but also an ecclesiastical necessity."[1]

IV

Criticism of Their View

The great defect in Schleiermacher's view is very commonly said to be his attempt to regard theology as a purely historical science. In a sense, perhaps, this is true; but from another point of view we cannot but recognise a very real insight in what he has to say under this head. Sympathetically regarded, it is to be taken as a protest against the use of speculative methods, and as a plea for the use of more empirical methods, in the investigation of the religious consciousness. What it means to say is that the method of theology is one of critical description or analysis—for of course no true history is uncritical. And that is not different from what we ourselves have said. Schleiermacher's position finds its belated justification in Signor Croce's recent insistence that philosophy and history come, in the last analysis, to pretty much the same thing. Concerning which more will be said in the next chapter.

Even more heartily must we agree with Schleiermacher, and with the Ritschlians, in insisting that religion can be effectively studied only from within. These thinkers were doing a notable and lasting service to the study of religion when they laid it down that the theologian must take up his view-point within his own religious consciousness and within the religious fellowship of which he is a member; as indeed he cannot avoid doing without ceasing to *be* a loyal and believing member.

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[1] *Dogmatik,* 5te Aufl., p. 104.

Where we are bound to take issue with Schleiermacher and the Ritschlians is not in their insistence that the business of the theologian is to present a faithful report, but in their view of the field which this report should cover; not in their insistence that the theologian should take up his position within his own religious consciousness and fellowship, but in their view as to how far extensible the limits of that consciousness and fellowship really are.

Schleiermacher held, as we saw, that the theologian's range was strictly confined within the limits of his own age and of the visible ecclesiastical organisation to which he adhered; while Ritschl held that it must extend to the furthest chronological and confessional confines of the religious system (that is, of what would commonly be called the "religion") of which his own sect claimed to be a true part. In making this extension Ritschl will carry us all with him. We shall all feel that the concern of the theologian, even if he be a convinced Lutheran and very much a child of the nineteenth century, is not simply with the nineteenth-century Lutheran religious consciousness, but with something much less circumscribed, something wider and bigger, something older and more enduring. We shall all feel with Ritschl and Herrmann that the prime concern of every Christian theologian is with nothing less than the *Christian* religious consciousness and the *Christian* faith. If the theologian were to confine his critical and systematising endeavours within the limits of Protestantism, for example, then he could take no cognisance of the points at issue between Protestantism and Romanism, and he would be precluded from making any critical judgment with reference to these points; yet such a judgment is, as we shall all feel, just what we should look to the theologian to give us; nor is there any good reason why a theologian should not as much tell us whether Protestantism or Romanism be the more authentic Christianity as (what even Schleiermacher would allow to be within his remit) whether the preaching from this or that Lutheran pulpit be the better Protestantism. A writer like Herrmann cannot but win our sympathy for his contention that all true Christian fellowships, in whatever age appearing, have something deep and fundamental in common, and that by reference to this basic element of identity each may be appraised and the measure of good and evil, of truth and error in it recognised. In this matter, if in no other, Schleiermacher takes sectarianism too seriously, and also he takes the spirit of the age too seriously. But there are fewer serious students now than there were in his day whose dominating interest is in their own sect; and there are more whose interest is in the whole breadth and depth and unversality of the Christian religion.

The Ritschlians, however, though anxious to give to the theologian, whatever be his 'sect' or 'communion,' the whole field of Christian faith for his province, would yet confine him strictly to *Christian* faith. They make much lighter than did Schleiermacher of the spiritual fissures which divide Romanist from Protestant, Anglican from Methodist, first-century from nineteenth-century Christian; but of the fissure which divides Christianity of every age and brand from all other religion they make as much as can be made. The former fissures, they would seem to say, are mere surface cracks; the latter fissure goes clear down to the bottom.

Thus although the Ritschlian broadening of Schleiermacher's standpoint engages our hearty sympathy so far as it goes, yet the fact that the broadening process stops dead on reaching the confines of distinctively Christian belief is likely to make us feel that, after all, Schleiermacher's view, if indeed absurdly narrow, was at least a self-consistent one, robustly thought out, and comparing very well with the halting and compromissary character of this other. For ourselves, we can no longer stop short in our retreat from Schleiermacher's position, at the point where the Ritschlians intrenched themselves. We should indeed very readily grant—and we shall, when the proper time comes, be found insisting—that the broad line which marks off Christian religion from all forms of pre-Christian religion stands for as notable an advance as the spiritual history of our race has anywhere to show. Nevertheless the Ritschlians have made altogether too much of it and have exaggerated its distinctness and the degree and kind of its dissimilarity from the lines of division that exist within the Christian tradition itself. The paradox of their position perhaps reaches its climax in the denial (which seems to follow logically from their premises and which is, as we have seen, very outspokenly expressed by Herrmann) of any ultimate ground of faith that is common to the Christian and the Jew. As the late Dr. Denney remarked in 1894, this strain in Ritschlianism really harks back to that Marcionism which could define the relation of the Old Testament to the Christian Gospel only "negatively—by contrast, not by connection, or even by comparison."[1] Nothing, however, could well be more unhistorical than such a view. On the whole it must be said that our Lord placed even more emphasis on the basic identity of His Gospel with the traditional religion of His people than on its culminating differences from that religion. "I came," He said, "not to destroy, but to fulfil."[2] In particular we fail, in reading the Gospels, to get the impression that Jesus was offering to Peter and James and John a wholly new ground of belief in God which was to take the place of that which had always been in their possession as Jewish believers. Nor has the Christian Church ever approved a view of this kind, as its use of the Old Testament and its attitude towards the Old Testament saints are alone sufficient to show. If appeal be made from history to our own experience, the same result appears. We cannot but be aware of an element of paradox in Herrmann's declaration that "he does not know" through what media the knowledge of God comes to men who have no knowledge of Christ. Would it be unpardonable to suggest that he *ought* to know? At all events we will say that the gulf which divides even the modern Christian from the Israelite of the period when the Psalms were written (let alone that which divided a first-century Jew from a Jewish Christian of the same day), profound as it is, is both exaggerated and misinterpreted in his pages. These ancients were made of the same human stuff (or is it divine stuff?) that we ourselves are made of; and not only the impulse which made them seek God, but also the insight by which they found Him, are the same which make us seek and find Him to-day. As Denney puts it, "It is the same Word of God which became Incarnate in Jesus that speaks to the heart in the ancient Scriptures."[3]

The present-day theologian will thus join hands with the older tradition of Protestant theology in being anxious to include Hebrew religion within his purview as well as distinctively Christian religion. The trouble is, however, that he can no longer stop short, as the older tradition always did, with Hebrew religion. If he includes Hebrew religion, he must include Greek religion too; for just as he has a part in the one, so he has a part in the other; and just as the one has made an integral contribution to his Christian faith, so also has the other. The Christian religion which we now possess and preach is not, as we used to believe, the result of a unilinear development. "Our civilization," as Dean Inge well puts it, "is a tree which has its roots in Greece, or, to borrow a more appropriate metaphor from Clement of Alexandria, it is a river which has received affluents from every side; but its head waters are Greek. The continuity of Greek thought and practice in religion and religious philosophy is especially important." The religion of Hellenism (he goes so far as to say) "passes into Christian theology and cultus without any real break."[1] Nor is it by any means the truth that historical criticism has forced this family connection upon us against our liking; for there is that in our blood which makes us welcome our new-found kinsmen. The sixteenth-century theologians liked to think of Moses and David and Jeremiah as belonging, in a large sense, to the same spiritual fellowship as themselves. The modern theologian will have something of a similar feeling with regard to Socrates and Plato and Plotinus, Zeno and Seneca and Epictetus.

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[1] *Studies in Theology*, p. 211.

[2] Matt. 5 : 17.

[3] *Loc. cit.*

And of course it is as difficult, and as arbitrary, to stop short with the religion of the Greeks as it was with the religion of the Hebrews. For if we dig down to the roots of either, we shall find that it has sprung from a seed which has produced many another growth besides itself. Indeed, to stop short *anywhere* within the religious experience of our race is to express a purely arbitrary preference and to draw a line for ourselves where no line exists in the facts. Schleiermacher was right in his contention that once it advances beyond its safe intrenchment in the purely historiographic presentation of the doctrine current in a given ecclesiastical organisation at a given time, theological science can call no halt until it has reached the furthest limits of our human traffic with the Eternal World.

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[1] In *The Legacy of Greece*, ed., R. W. Livingstone, pp. 27, 28.

V

A Inner Unity and Its Consequences for Theological Stu

It follows that what the modern theologian must conceive of himself as setting out to study is not one particular variety of religion, but rather religion itself. We began this chapter by admitting that the religious life of our race is indeed such as to be likely, on a first general and superficial view of it, to leave upon the student's mind the impression that there is in the world no such thing as 'religion itself,' but only a vast number of different 'religions,' each of which stands for its own unique answer to the riddle of existence. We have now to add that this is an impression which tends, with deeper study and closer scrutiny, to become more and more dissipated in our minds. Moreover, in the change of mind which here comes to him, the individual student is but repeating in his own private experience a process of discovery which has already worked itself out in the larger medium of Western theological thought as a whole. There was a time when the history of religion read like the record of an almost infinite succession of wild, haphazard guesses at truth. Gradually that has been changed, until the vast panorama is coming to look more and more like a single scene. As we better learn to understand where the real heart of religion lies, we become increasingly aware of elements of identity, such as we had never before suspected, which unite every form of religion known to us. Certain common central characters more and more stand out, and above all we are forced to recognise that it is one impulse which has led all men everywhere to seek God and one insight which has enabled them, in however varying degrees, to find Him.

We can do no more here than remind ourselves briefly of one or two of the lines of historical study that have contributed to this result. To begin with there is the discovery of the remarkable similarity of the religious beliefs and practices of the various primitive peoples that inhabit different parts of the world. It is now almost universally granted that primitive religion should be treated as a single phenomenon, the features common to the cults of the various savage races far outweighing in importance the divergences between them. "Recent researches into the early history of man," says Sir James Frazer, "have revealed the essential similarity with which, under many superficial differences, the human mind has elaborated its first crude philosophy of life."[1] "Religion in the lower culture," says another scholar, "takes many forms, but, speaking broadly, they rest upon a common interpretation of the world."[2] In the second place, it is equally certain that the closer study which, under the guidance of a more generous sympathy, is now being devoted to the religious systems of the various civilised races is every day tending more and more to break down the hard-and-fast lines that used to separate them in our thought. It is now impossible to mention any 'religion' that is regarded by the historian as a self-contained unit. Every known 'religion' is a complex phenomenon, a synthesis of previous historical entities, many or all of which have entered also as elements into those partially different combinations which are called the other 'religions.' "There have been," says George Tyrrell wisely, "and may yet be new religious institutions; but there has not been and never can be a new religion, any more than a new language. Each is a bifurcation of some branch that is itself a bifurcation; and all can trace their origin to a common stem that has grown out of a root-idea—the idea of religion."[3] And in particular, as we have already sufficiently seen, irreparable damage has been done to the Ritschlian position that Christianity is a thing entirely *sui generis,* all of one web and of a web that has never elsewhere been woven. In the vocabulary of the modern historian Christianity is the name of a long development which took its rise in a new synthesis and incarnation of elements that themselves were not new. We are beginning to see that the strength and significance of the Christian religion lies not so much in its uniqueness as in its universality, not so much in its originality as in its inclusiveness. As it has been well expressed by Dean Inge, "the Gospel of Christ is not so much *a* religion, but religion itself, in its most universal and deepest significance."[4]

The truth is, therefore, that however many competing varieties of religion there may be in the world, however many rival religious institutions, however many successive stages in the progress of religion, yet in any proper and profound sense there is but one religion—the religion which finds its first crude and vague expression on the lips of the savage; the religion which gradually, though stumblingly and blunderingly, rises to certain lower summits of its noble ascent in Veda and Zend-Avesta, in Greek tragedian and Hebrew law-giver and prophet; the religion which (as we believe) reaches its final expression, its full articulation, as well as its freedom from all false and alien admixtures, in the soul of Jesus Christ.[1]

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[1] *The Golden Bough*, abridged ed., p. 2.

[2] J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, p. 101.

[3] *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 252.

[4] *Outspoken Essays*, first series, p. 229.

And if there is only one religion, then there can be only one theology. There are many theologies only in that subsidiary sense in which there are many astronomies (the Pythagorean, the Ptolemaic, the Copernican and so forth) and many moral philosophies (the Aristotelian, the Utilitarian and so forth). So we may speak of the Aristotelian theology, or of the Thomist, or of the Ritschlian. But just as each of these astronomies is but an attempt to be the one true astronomy, which takes the whole heaven for its field; and just as each of these moral philosophies is but an attempt to be the one true moral philosophy, which takes for its field the whole range of our human consciousness of duty; so each of these theologies makes claim to be the one true theology, and to take for its field our whole human insight into the Eternal World.

Yet we must enter a warning against a possible misunderstanding. To say that the theologian's subject-matter is the religious consciousness as such does not, of course, mean that he cannot be a good theologian unless he take separate cognisance of every different form under which human religion has made its appearance in the world—a task sheerly impossible, if ever any was. Indeed the essence of our contention is the very reverse of that; for if it be true that all religious systems hold their most deep-seated principles in common, then the theologian whose acquaintance is limited to even one of these may nevertheless attain to a real measure of understanding of the essential nature of all religion; and if it be true that the Christian religion includes, rather than excludes, all that is of value in what is elsewhere to be found in the world, then the theologian who knows nothing of any religion but the Christian may nevertheless know all there is to know.[1] The case of ethics is here again closely parallel. When the task of theology is described as the investigation and systematisation of human faith as such, the beginner is sometimes inclined to feel that, in view of the vast variety of faiths that there are among men, his task is one of impossible magnitude and difficulty. Yet why should this be felt in the case of theology any more than in the case of ethics, seeing that conscience also

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[1] I have ventured to transcribe these words from the fourth chapter of my book, *The Roots of Religion*, and there are other echoes of that chapter in the foregoing pages. But to say that all true religion is one religion is good catholic teaching. For instance, Monseigneur Le Roy, writing of the religion of savages, says: "In reality there is only one religion, there never has been but one, and there never will be but one." (*The Religion of the Primitives*, Eng. transl., p. 327.)

"hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale." . . . ?[2]

Just as the moralist finds the whole moral striving of his race, so may not the theologian find its whole religious quest, reflected in microcosm in his own soul's experience?

It is for this reason that the theological work of Schleiermacher and of the Ritschlians was after all less gravely vitiated than might have been expected by the very narrow way in which they conceived their task. One unfortunate result, however, their narrowness and exclusivism undoubtedly has had—it has severely limited their influence and has prevented their work from securing the general recognition which in every other respect it deserves at the hands of all serious students of religion. On the other hand it is just to its complete avoidance of such exclusivism and its full recognition of the solidarity of human religion that we must look for the secret of the great influence exercised for two generations by Hegel's *Religionsphilosophie*—a work otherwise very measurably inferior in religious insight to such a book as *Der christliche Glaube* or even to the more crabbed and limited *chef-d'œuvre* of Ritschl.

And the evil still continues. The systematic theologians still continue to regard themselves as being engaged in the investigation, not of faith in God as such, but of one variety of faith. And those who feel their interest in religion to be of a wider kind, and whose questionings naturally tend to set out from a broader basis, have on the whole chosen to ignore systematic theology rather than to criticise it and reshape it to their own use. They have accepted its own account of itself without demur and have allowed it to pursue its little-noticed way as an exponent of ecclesiastical dogma; and themselves they have conceived to be engaged upon a wholly different line of investigation which they have sometimes called, in Hegelian fashion, the philosophy of religion, but now more commonly call the science of religion or the psychology of religion or both. There is no doubt that these new disciplines have now taken the place of the old systematic theology in the affections both of the college student and of the general reader; and there is little doubt that they are seldom entirely free from a sceptical tendency which seems directly due to their very complacent self-divorcement from what is regarded as theology proper. The present-day student is thus constantly falling between two stools—the text-books of "theology" which could not interest him, and a "science of religion" which is full of interest and which on every page arouses his sympathy, but which never brings him face to face with the question of ultimate truth and validity at all. The only remedy for this situation lies in a definite *rapprochement* between the two view-points. With the part which systematic theology must play in this *rapprochement* we have concerned ourselves in this chapter; with the part which must be played in it by the newer disciplines we shall be concerned in the next chapter but one.

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[1] This point receives full attention on pp. 121 ff. below.

[2] *Richard III*, Act V, Scene 3.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITIQUE OF THE SPECULATIVE METHOD IN THEOLOGY

I

A History of Rationalism

In the preceding chapters we have given some account of the theological method we are ourselves proposing to follow. In this chapter and the next we shall be concerned with the evaluation and criticism of certain alternative methods that have been suggested.

If one turns over the pages of the earlier leaders of modern theology—Kant and Schleiermacher and afterwards Ritschl and, in England, a writer like Coleridge—one finds that much of their argument is directed against a way of theologising which they designate variously as "natural theology," "physico-theology," and "speculative theology." It is clear that the method of theology which they have here in mind is but one aspect of the general tendency of thought which is called rationalism and which had its heyday during the hundred or hundred and fifty years immediately preceding the appearance of the thinkers just mentioned—a period which has therefore come to be known as the *sæculum rationalisticum*, the Age of Reason.

We can best understand what rationalism is by going back to its historical origins, which is to say, to the attitude adopted towards religion by the earliest Greek philosophers and scientists. We have already seen how, when science first came into being among the pre-Socratic schools, it was essentially *natural* science, *i. e.*, an investigation into the *nature* of the environing universe. The investigators, however, very soon came upon the fact that there was already present on the field a rival claimant to knowledge about the nature of things, namely religion. How then were they to deal with religion, and what notice were they to take of its claims and of its deliverances? The answering of this question does not appear to have given very much trouble to any of the Greek *savants*, for they, one and all of them, seem to have taken for granted that only as much of the traditional religion could be held to be true as was in agreement with the results of their own scientific investigations. The majority of them do not indeed seem to have altogether denied to religion a separate source of insight of its own; for Cicero tells us that Xenophanes and Epicurus were the only Greek thinkers who expressly denied the possibility of divination and revelation.[1] But they obviously did not attach great importance to any other way of obtaining knowledge than their own scientific method, and perhaps many of them were more sceptical of the reality of a directer revelation than they allowed themselves to say openly. At all events their regular procedure was to pursue their independent scientific inquiries until some result was reached and then to say that *this* must be what religion was all the time struggling to express. Thus it was the general fashion among the pre-Socratics to identify, in very summary manner, the so-called "gods" of religion with that underlying *nature* (*physis*)—or, as it afterwards came to be expressed, those underlying elements—of which they found all things to consist. *Physis*, they said, is *theos*—a deliverance which was afterwards latinized into the famous and fateful phrase *deus sive natura*.

In the philosophy of Socrates and the Socratic dialogues of Plato a very different and (as now seems to us) far more adequate approach to the philosophical problem of religion is definitely adumbrated; yet in Plato's latest work, the *Laws*, we find ourselves still in the presence of the old attempt of the Ionian "physiologues" to buttress as much as possible of the traditional religion by exhibiting its coincidence with the assured results of scientific research. What Plato does here is first to select what seem to him to be the three essential beliefs of religion—the existence, the providence and the incorruptibility of God—and then to cast about him for any arguments that may be used in their support. The idea that religion begins with a belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the resultant idea that theology should begin by trying to find some buttress for that belief, thus both go back to Plato; who was, indeed, the first man in human history to formulate a "proof of the existence of God," as well as being the inventor of the phrase.[1] Plato himself puts forward two proofs—one drawn from the field of epistemology, the other from that of mathematical astronomy, and he declares that "no mortal man can be secure in his religion" who does not possess the necessary knowledge leading up to these two demonstrations.[2]

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[1] Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I., 3.

The historical influence of this Platonic formulation was immensely increased by the fact that it was adopted, almost without change, by Plato's great pupil, Aristotle. Aristotle, like his master, takes it to be the first business of "theological science" (as he himself called that part of his system which afterwards came to be known as the *Metaphysica*) to provide satisfying demonstration of the existence of "a living Being, eternal, most good, to whom life and duration unbroken and eternal belong; for that is what we mean by God."[3] And the two lines of proof which he puts forward are just those which had already been put forward by Plato—the epistemological argument from the primacy of soul over body, and the astronomical argument from the perfect orderliness and circularity of the stellar motions. It is moreover possible, he tells us, to establish by means of astronomical investigation the existence, not merely of one Supreme Being, but of no less than fifty-five subsidiary celestial beings,[4] who may be called gods. Up to this point, then, traditional religion can be substantiated by scientific investigation; but beyond that point it cannot be so substantiated and must consequently be regarded as merely mythological in character. Aristotle concludes his discussion with this paragraph:

> "The tradition has been handed down by the men of olden time and by those of the most remote ages to us their posterity, in the form of a myth, that these beings are gods and that the divine surrounds all nature. But as for the rest of the tradition, it is a later mythical addition with an eye to the persuasion of the multitude and to its advantage from the point of view of law and expediency.[5] For according to it, these beings are human in form or like some of the other animals, and other things like that and following from that are said. If, however, the first point—that they held the prime beings to be gods—be separated from the rest, we must regard this as divinely spoken, and remember that, whereas each of the arts and philosophies appears to have often been discovered and again

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[1] ἀπόδειξις ὡς εἰσὶν θεοί, *Laws*, 893b. [2] *Laws*, 967d. [3] *Metaphysica*, 1072b.

[4] Afterwards identified by the mediæval doctors with the "angels" of the Hebrew tradition.

[5] One feels like saying: "How eighteenth-century!"

perished, these doctrines have been preserved, like precious relics, to the present day. Only so much, therefore, of the traditional and patriarchal doctrine is clear to us."[1]

There were, of course, a few philosophers in Greece who came to a very different and much more subversive conclusion, holding that no part of the traditional belief (not even the existence of God) was capable of scientific demonstration, and boldly declaring that there was therefore no truth at all in religion. When, however, the traditions of Greek scholarship passed from pagan into Christian hands, the last vestiges of such sceptical views soon disappeared, and Aristotle's position came—with one very far-reaching modification, or rather addition—to be the universally accepted one. The thinkers of the Middle Ages all followed Aristotle's lead in looking to science (or, what was for them, as for him, the same thing, philosophy) for the confirmation of their religious creed. And for the most part they fell in with his estimate as to exactly how much of this creed, and what particular articles of it, were capable of this kind of confirmation. Where they radically differed from him, or rather went completely beyond him, was in their firm belief in, and wholehearted reliance upon, a second and utterly different source of religious knowledge which was every whit as trustworthy as science and which, besides offering independent confirmation of those articles of creed which science had been able to reach in its own way, introduced them to a great many other articles which science could never hope to reach at all. This other source was nothing less than the communication of ready-made information from God to the Christian Church by a means so direct that it could be open to no doubt or question but must be accepted *in toto* without regard to its inherent likelihood.

Thus arose the mediæval doctrine of the two ways of knowledge—reason and revelation, science and faith. According to this doctrine, as finally formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas, it is possible to reach the simpler articles of the Christian creed by either one of two entirely different methods—by the pursuit of scientific and philosophic inquiry on the one hand, and by consulting the sacred tradition on the other. Examples of such articles are the existence and unity of God, the immortality of the soul and the main outlines of the Ptolemaic cosmology. Thus far, then, science and faith can walk hand in hand. But the rest of the way faith must walk alone. Of the Trinity of God, of the true doctrine of creation and the approaching end of the world, as well as of the divine plan of salvation, we can learn only by looking to Sacred Writ. Aristotle, we know, would have regarded all such doctrines as mere "myths"; but to the mediæval doctors they were truths of exactly the same kind as those which science was able to verify, having been reached by a method that was, if possible, even more reliable than science's own. This position is what has been called the Mediæval Synthesis, and it is without question the most widely influential synthesis of the respective claims of science and religion which the history of ✓ thought has so far witnessed. We might describe it as the perfectly harmonious marriage of Greek rationalism with Hebrew-Christian traditionalism.

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[1] *Metaphysica*, 1074b.

In the particular arguments which the Mediævals employed to substantiate those articles of their creed which they believed capable of scientific demonstration, they for the most part followed Aristotle very closely. St. Thomas's chapter in his *Summa contra Gentiles* dealing with the proofs of the existence of God (*Rationes ad probandum Deum esse*) is, indeed, nothing but a careful summary of Aristotle's words. It is true that Zeno the Stoic had, a quarter of a century after Aristotle's death, suggested that the existence of God did not need to be scientifically *proved,* but belonged rather to those self-evidencing axioms which are at the bottom of all scientific knowledge; and this view had met with not a little favour among the scholars of the Hellenistic period. Again in the eleventh century of our era Anselm of Canterbury, while not claiming that the existence of God was a self-evident and intuitively known proposition, had nevertheless suggested that it could be proved by a purely deductive process—by an analysis of the concept of God itself, without having recourse to any induction from the facts of experience. But with neither of these suggestions would St. Thomas have anything to do. The only way, he taught (apart from revelation), by which God can be known to exist is the way of induction from sensibly perceived facts. All true theistic arguments are arguments from the world as we know it to God as its Cause.[1]

The Mediæval Synthesis, in its final or Thomistic form, still remains the orthodox theology of the Roman Catholic Church, but in other quarters it has long ago fallen prey to the severest form of criticism. The beginnings of this criticism may be traced back to the fifteenth century, but it was not until the seventeenth century that it began to receive really effective expression. Now it is most important that we should notice the form which this criticism took. It took the form of a greater and ever-increasing reliance upon the "light of reason"; so that finally, perhaps by the middle of the eighteenth century, it became no uncommon thing for philosophers and radically-minded theologians altogether to disregard faith and revelation as a possible avenue to truth, and to place their sole reliance upon the results of a purely scientific philosophy.

This is the position which we now know as rationalism. Historically regarded, it may be defined as the view which leaves one-half of the Mediæval Synthesis (its theory of reason) just as it was, while setting the other half (the theory of revelation) completely aside. A good early example of such a position may be found in the philosophy of Spinoza, who died in 1677. According to this illustrious thinker there are three kinds or grades of knowledge. The lowest kind of knowledge is *opinion,* the ordinary confused and unscientific stock-in-trade of ~~our~~ minds. To this level of knowledge belongs ordinary religious faith, which is therefore quite worthless from the point of view of truth, however useful it may be for practical guidance in the duties of common life. The second kind of knowledge is *reason;* that is to say, demonstrative science, or philosophy *more geometrico,* which gives us accurate knowledge of "particular things." The third and highest kind of knowledge is *intuition*—the true religious vision of things. What we have here, of course, is simply Aquinas' threefold distinction of reason, faith and vision; but with this significant difference—that Spinoza, having set aside revelation, now sets faith below reason, whereas Aquinas had set it above it. How then is the third and highest kind of knowledge, the true knowledge of God, to be attained? Spinoza's consistent answer is, By the study of demonstrative science. "The endeavour or desire to know things by the third kind of knowledge cannot arise from the first, but only from the second kind of knowledge."[1] "The more we understand particular things, the more we understand God."[2] It will be seen that Spinoza follows Plato and Aristotle and all the thinkers of the Middle Ages in holding that, quite apart from faith in a divine revelation, demonstrative science can of itself lead us to a sure belief in the reality of a Being who is worthy to be called "God." But as in ancient Greece, so now in eighteenth-century England and France and Germany there arose other thinkers whose investigations seemed to lead them to a quite opposite result. They could not, they were fain to admit, find any valid argument which led from nature to God. Science, so far as they could see, could do without the hypothesis of a Divine Being. And so they concluded that there was no truth at all in religion.

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[1] "Etsi Deus sensibilia omnia et sensum excedat, eius tamen effectus, ex quibus demonstratio sumitur ad probandum Deum esse, sensibiles sunt." (*Contra Gentiles, Lib.* I, *Cap.* XII *finis.*)

Now it is this way of settling the question of the truth of religion which the great inaugurators of modern theology called the "Speculative Method" and set themselves with so much energy to overthrow. They were in full agreement with the rationalists in believing that the Mediæval Synthesis could no longer stand. They agreed with them also in thinking that the traditional conception of revelation as a body of directly communicated ready-made knowledge, and of faith as an acceptance of the *verba scripta* of the Bible, must forever be set aside. But they did not at all agree that the way to mend the situation was therefore to allow this second half of the synthesis ("faith and revelation") to drop altogether out of sight and mind, and thereby to leave the traditional conception of the first half ("the light of reason and nature") standing quite unrevised and alone, as the one authentic avenue to the knowledge of God. On the contrary they were quite as profoundly dissatisfied with the method of "natural theology" as they were with the method of "revealed theology," and they held that the truth lay with neither, but in some sense between the two. The notion that the truth of religion was to be tested by comparison with the results of scientific cosmology was as utterly obnoxious to them as the notion that it was to be tested by the collation of "texts" from the ancient Scriptures.

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[1] *Ethica*, v. 28.

[2] *Ethica*, v. 24.

They were indisputably right; and to many of us to-day no way of tackling the theological problem now seems more wrongheaded than this way of rationalism. Before we go on to demonstrate its weakness, however, there is one final remark that falls to be made. Rationalism and the Speculative Method in theology are in no sense creations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but represent, as we have seen, a well-established tradition which goes back through the Middle Ages to the attitude assumed towards religion by the Greek philosophers. There is a sense in which St. Thomas Aquinas was as confident a rationalist as any thinker of the *sæculum rationalisticum,* for he had as complete a confidence in the power of scientific and metaphysical research to settle the question of the ultimate truth of religion by its own unaided powers. There is a sense also in which the orthodox Christian apologists of the eighteenth century, who were the lineal descendants of scholastic orthodoxy, were as rationalistic in outlook as were their more radical-minded opponents. Where the ecclesiastical theologians like Butler and Paley differed from the writers of the opposite camp was in two respects: first, that conjoined to their rationalism was a belief in a second avenue to religious assurance, namely, revelation; and, secondly, that, though professing to use the same rationalistic method as was used by their opponents, they seemed to be led to very different conclusions. "The essential point," says Professor Sorley, "in the method called rationalism was the limited view taken of reason; *and this feature was common to the writers in both camps.*"[1] "There was a vital kinship between them," says Professor McGiffert, "more significant than any differences."[2] And again, "The age of rationalism was not, as distinguished from other periods, the age of reason, but of the conflict of the new reason with the old. . . . The fact of historic significance is not the divergence of view between deists and

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[1] *Moral Values and the Idea of God,* p. 462. Italics mine. For a fuller statement the same author's *History of English Philosophy* may be consulted.

[2] *Protestant Thought Before Kant,* p. 229.

Christian apologists, but their acceptance of common intellectual principles and their reading of religion in the light of them."[1]

Thus the method of theologising which we are in this chapter concerned to criticise is a method common to the philosophic critics of religion on the one hand and the orthodox mediæval and eighteenth-century apologists of religion on the other—a method, moreover, which ultimately goes back, through Aristotle, to the *Laws* of Plato.

II

History + Characterization of t
Speculative apologetics of Rel
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The characteristic features of the Speculative Method may now be put in a sentence. Instead of throwing its energy into the examination of the actual nature and grounds of existing religious faith, this method

(1) Tends to assume that the nature of faith need not be made the object of any very elaborate inquiry, its central utterances being clear enough, even to the casual observer, and

(2) Then casts about in the granaries of scientific and metaphysical research for any possible bit of evidence that could be used in support of these utterances.

The particular formulation of this method which has enjoyed the widest repute, or notoriety, during the past century and a half goes back to Christian Wolf, the somewhat pedantic Leibnitzian professor who so greatly influenced the course of Kant's philosophical reflections. Wolf

(1) Assumes the central concern of religion to lie in the affirmation of three more or less independent realities—"God, freedom and immortality," and

(2) Holds that the first of these affirmations, the existence of God, can be supported by three different lines of argument—"the ontological, cosmological and teleological proofs."

Such is the form in which speculative apologetics finally became crystallised, and it was in this form that Kant made it the target of his epoch-making criticism. It is, however, a very artificial form, for Wolf was a very artificial thinker, too fond of marshalling all the arguments of previous philosophers in mass-formation or in triple ranks. It is much more instructive to go back twenty-three centuries to what is at once the greatest and the earliest speculative defence of religion, as well as the ultimate source of all later ones—that of Plato himself.

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[1] *Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, pp. 18, 21–22.

As we have seen, Plato, like Wolf, put the existence of God first among three articles of creed which he believed to form the real essence of religion; and it is to his proof of this first article alone that we must, in the first instance at least, confine our attention. The argument to which Plato has resort consists of two stages or parts, and admits of very simple statement. The first part is really a defence of what we should now call the animistic or spiritualistic view of the world. All those movements or processes with the ultimate origination of which we are actually acquainted are due to the activity of mind or soul or life; and hence—so Plato argues—by far the simplest and most reasonable explanation of those movements the origination of which is not directly known to us (which is to say, the processes of external nature) is to suppose that they are due to the same kind of cause. In other words, the ultimate source of evolutionary process (*archē tēs kinēseōs*) must be a Supreme Soul; and it is just this assertion of the natural primacy of soul over body which is the central nerve of the Platonic philosophy. Soul, as Plato himself likes to put it, is older than body; or, as we should put it now, mind is prior to matter. The second part of the argument consists of an appeal, in support of this animistic view of the origin of all natural processes, to the observed nature of some of them as disclosed by technical natural science. The particular movements to which Plato directs our attention are the movements of the stars, as revealed by the brilliant astronomical investigations of the Pythagorean school and of his own Academy. These movements seemed to him to provide unequivocal direct evidence of the presence behind nature, not only of a Supreme Soul, but of a Supreme Soul who is good—that is, God. For, as he argues, the perfect orderliness of the stellar motions cannot be explained in any other way than by referring them to an order-loving intelligence. The following passage, which is possibly the last he ever wrote, excellently summarises his thought:

> "There are two things which lead men to faith in the gods. . . . One is the argument about the soul—that it is the oldest and most divine of all things. . . . The other is the argument from the orderliness of the courses of the stars and of everything that is controlled by the Mind which orders the universe. For no man who looks at these things seriously and with judgment has ever been such an atheist as not to experience the opposite of what the majority imagine. For they think that those who handle such questions by the help of astronomy and the other arts that necessarily go with it, become atheists, because, so far as they can see, things happen by necessity instead of by the purpose of a Will directed to good ends. . . . The truth is, however, the opposite of the idea once current that the heavenly bodies are soulless. Even at that time those whose observations were accurate were astonished, for they suspected what is now ascertained, that soulless things without intelligence to guide them could never have displayed such remarkably calculable accuracy [in their movements]. . . . No mortal man can be secure in his religion who does not possess the two things I have spoken of. He must know that soul is the oldest thing in creation and is immortal and has precedence of all bodies; and over and above this, as has now been said many times, he must know that the Mind of things is in the stars, and have all the necessary knowledge leading up to that."[1]

To this great and impressive statement the later history of thought added very little. Only three changes or additions need here be noted. (*a*) The most significant of these is perhaps the broader statement of the argument from order or design which afterwards became current. The appeal to the orderliness of the movements of the stars gave place to a wider appeal to the orderliness present everywhere in nature. The wonders of animal and vegetable life were seen to bear as plainly the marks of design as ever the midnight sky. Yet this difference is only one of emphasis. Nearly all those apologists who have made use of the argument from design have been more especially impressed by the evidences of design furnished by some one particular sphere of nature. Paley, writing as late as 1802, says, "For my part, I take my stand in human anatomy." And Plato, writing about 350 B. C., may be taken as saying only that he, for *his* part, takes his stand in mathematical astronomy.

(*b*) The other, or first, half of Plato's proof was finally degraded into what came to be called the Cosmological Argument —the argument from the essential contingency of nature to a First Cause thereof. This argument, however, does not seem to prove anything worth proving, unless it be understood in Plato's spiritualistic sense. That all things must have a first cause (or causes) of *some* sort is perhaps too obvious to need laboured proof, and is in any case a statement of no real religious interest. What Plato was at so great pains to establish was no such bald abstraction but the quite definitely spiritualistic—or, as it has more commonly, but less accurately, been called, idealistic—hypothesis that the first cause of all things must be of the nature, not of matter, but of mind. The so-called Berkeleian argument is a refined and special form of this thought of Plato's. What Berkeley tried to do was to show, by means of a brilliantly original analysis of the process of sense-perception, that the stability and persistence of the things we see and touch are to be accounted for, not on the hypothesis that they have an independent material existence, but rather on the hypothesis that they are being eternally perceived by an Infinite Mind.

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[1] *Laws*, Book XII, 966–967.

(c) The third of Wolf's arguments, the Ontological, was, as we saw, first put forward by Anselm as "a single argument which would require no other for its proof than itself alone, and alone would suffice to demonstrate that God truly exists."[1] The later history of this argument is too well-known to need repeating. Rejected completely by St. Thomas Aquinas as an insupportable sophism, "ontologism" still continues to be condemned by Roman Catholic theology. Reasserted after the Renaissance by Descartes and others, it was finally incorporated in Wolf's formulation and thus came in for the crushing criticism of Kant. From this latter it has never fully recovered; and though we may no doubt agree with Hegel that behind its seeming absurdity there is a deeper significance than Kant was able (or cared) to discover, yet it is in the last resort impossible to doubt that Kant was right. Whatever else "ontologism" may or may not be good for, it is at least certain that it is incapable of giving any support to what religion means by belief in God. As St. Thomas saw, any argument which attempts to show that religious belief is implied in the very laws of thought and therefore "goes without saying," condemns itself; it being of the very essence of religious truth that it can (and that all too easily) be doubted, and requires active faith in order to its acceptance.[1] Since, however, we have lately been warned by Mr. Bertrand Russell that "the ontological argument and most of its refutations are found to depend on bad grammar,"[2] we shall refrain from saying more, associating ourselves only with the shrewd conclusion of Locke that, in any case, "it is an ill way of establishing this truth, and silencing atheists, to lay the whole stress of so important a point as this upon that sole foundation."[3]

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[1] *Proslogium*, Preface.

It will thus be seen that Plato's original twofold proof has never really been improved upon, but still remains the best and most convincing statement of its kind. Let us now ask how far it carries us, and whether it really succeeds in proving what is intended.

III

The Argument from Design considered

We shall find it convenient to consider first the second half of it, that is, the appeal to the admirable ordering of external nature, as especially disclosed by the study of the various natural sciences. Is it, we must ask, still possible to claim with Plato that the unprejudiced study of external nature must of itself alone inevitably produce a conviction of the existence of a Supreme Spirit who makes all things work together for good?

The answer can hardly be in the affirmative. For one thing, the particular marks of benevolent design on which Plato put his main reliance have been largely swept away by modern astronomy, and nobody since the fifteenth century has ever ventured to appeal to them again. Since that time the emphasis has been mainly placed, as by Paley, on the unquestionably marvellous adaptations revealed by the study of the structure of living organisms. How (it has been said) explain the structure of the human eye except on the hypothesis that the first example of it (and the organism which possessed it and which was gifted with the power to reproduce its kind) was designed and manufactured by One who understood the properties of lenses and the laws of refraction and reflection? How explain the 'protective' resemblance of a butterfly to the leaf of the tree on which it lives, except by supposing its prime progenitor to have been deliberately so fashioned by a benevolent Creator? In Paley's day these questions were all but unanswerable, for nobody had yet mooted any other satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of adaptation than the hypothesis of 'special design.' But with the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 all was changed. Another and easier explanation was now for the first time put into the hands of the scientists—the hypothesis of natural selection and of the survival of the fittest. However much, said Darwin, the protective resemblance of the butterfly to the leaf may *look* like special design on the part of some guardian Intelligence, the real explanation is simply that all butterflies *not* so coloured have been unable to live in that particular environment; and this one variety has survived and multiplied because, out of the countless numbers that the millenniums have produced, it was likest to the leaf. "Thus"—to take another instance given by Darwin—"we can no longer argue that the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by a man."[1]

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[1] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, Liber* I, *Cap.* X. *De opinione dicentium quod Deum esse demonstrari non potest, quum sit per se notum;* and *Cap.* XI. *Reprobatio præmissæ opinionis.*

[2] In *Contemporary British Philosophy*, edited by Muirhead, first series, p. 365.

[3] *Essay*, IV, 10, § 7. It will be plain from the above that I find myself in very substantial disagreement with the treatment of the matter by C. C. J. Webb in his *Problems in the Relation of God and Man*, pp. 173–189, especially with the contention that "the unity of subject and object which is postulated by knowledge," and which is what the Ontological Argument really does succeed in proving, "is divined by religion as its own object." Can we, however, go as far as C. D. Broad and say that "it is universally admitted by philosophers and theologians that the argument is logically fallacious?" (*Hibbert Journal*, 1925, p. 43.) But S. Alexander's view is worth setting down: "The famous ontological argument proves nothing more than that the totality of things is real; which is a bare tautology." (*Space, Time and Deity*, vol. II, p. 343 *n.*)

It may be claimed, however, that what Newton's discovery in astronomy and Darwin's discovery in biology have really done is not to render the hypothesis of design unnecessary, but only to thrust it one step farther back in the chain of explanation. *Special* design and manufacture are now eliminated from the cosmic process; for the law of gravitation gives a better immediate explanation of the circularity of the stellar orbits than Plato's hypothesis that each is separately described by a Superhuman Being who delighted in circles as the only "perfect" figures; and the law of natural selection gives a better immediate explanation of the phenomena of adaptation than Paley's hypothesis that they are the direct results of benevolent special creation. But there is still the larger question as to who invented, and as to who sustains in operation, the laws of gravitation and of natural selection themselves, together with the whole system of natural law and order to which they belong. And is not the only reasonable answer to this question just this—that the law and order of the universe were invented, and are sustained, by an Intelligent Being with a view to their producing just such results as we now see and wonder at? Does it not come in the end to this—that we are no longer, like Paley, to think of God as producing the hinge of a shell or the lens of an eye as a craftsman produces a hand-made article, but rather to think of Him as inventing and setting in motion a mighty system of mechanical laws which should, without any further special intervention on His part, produce the things He wanted made, as a modern manufacturer invents and constructs machines which will mechanically produce for him the articles required?

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[1] Quoted from *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Vol. I, p. 309, by Professor W. Fulton in the article on "Teleology" in the *Encyc. of Rel. and Eth.*

That there is much weight in this contention cannot be denied, and indeed it would be entirely sound as it stands, if only the scientist could feel that the laws of nature do really form a machine intended to turn out the heavenly bodies, and all the living organisms, vegetable and animal, that inhabit them, by a purely mechanical process. A recent writer has thus pointed out that for a purely mechanistic biologist the argument from design must continue to be almost unanswerable[1]; and we must grant that he is right. But as a matter of fact the impression which the world of nature, when taken by itself and *in abstracto,* seems nowadays to leave upon the scientists' minds is not that of a system of things 'made' by a transcendent 'creator' by means of some mightily engineered complex of purely mechanical laws, but rather that of a system of things that is *itself* alive and growing. An organism, we are now told, cannot be said to have been 'made' like a watch or a telescope; it can only be said to have grown or developed; and what its existence points to is, at least in the first instance, much rather a creative principle of life within it than an omnipotent creative intelligence above and without it. The thought to which the scientific study of nature, *taken by itself,* thus leads us is, in the opinion of the large majority of present-day scientists, only that of an immanent, creative life-force; a groping, growing *élan vital;* a universe that is itself alive; and not yet the thought of a wise, kind, and almighty Providence who is above, and was before, the process. And of recent years the tendency has very generally been to look upon natural laws, not as forming a prearranged system which exists prior to organic life and is the means of bringing it into being, but rather as representing statistical averages taken over a large field of life itself, so that 'rigid' mechanism is no more than an appearance and "there are no fixed laws, subsisting at the outset and determining the individual agents to be what they are; the individual agents—plastic, possessing spontaneity, capable of development—are first there; order and law have still to become."[1] On this view, therefore, law and order are themselves products of the evolutionary process.

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[1] Dr. C. D. Broad, in *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. XXIV (1925), pp. 45–46. "I may say at once that I consider this to be an extremely strong argument if we grant two assumptions which are commonly made. The first is that organisms originated from inorganic matter. The second is that an organism really is nothing but a complicated machine, *i. e.*, that its characteristic behaviour is wholly due to the peculiar arrangement of its parts, and is not due to entirely new properties of matter which first appear at the organic level. If we reject either of these assumptions, the argument loses much of its force. If there have always been organisms of some kind, and no organism has ever originated from inorganic matter, there is no need to postulate a designing mind even though organisms be nothing but machines. And if organisms be not merely machines, there is no need to postulate a designing mind even though organisms did originate out of inorganic matter. Now, I do not see the least reason to believe that the characteristic behaviour of organisms can be wholly explained by the peculiar arrangement of their parts and the laws and properties of inorganic matter. Hence the argument for the existence of a designing mind from the peculiarities of organisms does not convince me, though I think it ought to have great weight with a purely mechanistic biologist.' *Cf.* also Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1927), pp. 12–14.

The query may still be pressed, however, whether the whole spectacle of nature and the whole story of astronomical and biological evolution can, as scientifically regarded, be made really credible on the hypothesis of a merely immanent and growing vital impulse, and apart altogether from the notion of a completely intelligent Mind and Will which was there to guide it from the beginning. This is a question which students of nature, as such, find it by no means easy to answer, and their usual inclination nowadays seems to be to leave it for the meanwhile in abeyance. The whole matter was carefully thought out a hundred and fifty years ago by that acutest of thinkers, David Hume, and it is still difficult to improve upon his conclusion:

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[1] From a summary of the views of James Ward by Professor Dawes Hicks in *The Hibbert Journal,* vol. XXIV, p. 57.

> "The whole of Natural Theology . . . resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined, proposition, That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence."[1]

Lord Balfour's conclusion in his Gifford Lectures of 1914 is not very different:

> "To me, then, it still seems that the common-sense 'argument from design' is still of value. But, if it carries us beyond mechanical materialism, it must be owned that it does not carry us very far towards a religious theology. It is inconsistent with Naturalism. It is inconsistent with Agnosticism. But its demands would be satisfied by the barest creed which acknowledged that the Universe, or part of it, showed marks of intelligent purpose. And though most persons willing to accept this impoverished form of Theism will certainly ask for more, this is not because they are swept forward by the inevitable logic of the argument, but because the argument has done something to clear a path which they were already anxious to pursue."[2]

A conclusion of this sort must, of course, be very disappointing to the champions of Speculative Theology as seeming to shatter their hope of finding a basis for religious faith in the purely empirical contemplation of external nature. But is it really disappointing in itself, disappointing to the religious man as such? Surely not. Surely religion has always been aware that nature, taken by itself, does no more than

"half reveal,
And half conceal, the soul within."

Has it not always been the teaching of religion that it is only the eye of *faith* which can surely discern the silver lining behind the dark clouds of destiny, and recognise the hand of a heavenly Father behind the apparent ruthlessness and relentlessness of nature's dealings? The truth is that if we look at nature without any prior equipment of religious faith, it will often appear very cruel and very blind, though sometimes—as is impossible not to think—kind and far-sighted, providing the healing for its own wounds. It all depends on what set of facts we have uppermost in our minds. But it seems impossible, on grounds drawn purely from the impartial study of nature, to decide which is the deeper view of it—to decide whether, as Coleridge put it, it is "a goddess in petticoats" or "a devil in a strait-waistcoat." For that decision we are inevitably thrown back (as mankind has, in truth, always been thrown back) on another and totally different source of insight—an insight arising from the demands of our own moral and spiritual natures.[1] It is true that the poet Wordsworth is often quoted in a contrary sense, as lending support to the hope that the contemplation of nature may of itself directly and originally beget faith in a spiritual reality; yet Wordsworth himself writes:

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[1] *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Bruce McEwen, p. 189.
[2] *Theism and Humanism*, p. 56.

> "*Thanks to the human heart by which we live,*
> Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, its fears,
> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."[2]

Sometimes also the testimony of a Hebrew lyrist that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his

[1] So Windelband in *Präludien*, p. 315: "Für die empirische Beobachtung ist das Dysteleologische ebenso Tatsache wie das Teleologische, ist in der Welt ebenso Unordnung, Unzweckmässigkeit und Hässlichkeit wie das Gegenteil; eine Statistik des Mehr oder Minder von Beiden ist sinnlos und unmöglich, und so ist rein theoretisch nicht abzusehen, weshalb das eine mehr als das andere zur inhaltlichen Begriffsbestimmung des Weltgrundes herangezogen werden sollte." Compare also C. C. J. Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, pp. 55, 57: "It is a commonplace that the progress of the natural sciences has made it more difficult than it was to discover, with the old deists and their opponents alike, convincing evidence of the existence of a wise and good—especially of a good—God in the order of the world apart from man. . . . *No doubt when once the revelation in the spirit of man is recognised, we may go on to seek in nature attributes of the divine Being which, apart from their revelation in man, we should not have been able to discover there.*" (The italics are mine.) Professor W. E. Hocking, of Harvard, goes so far as to say: "The world would be consistent without God: it would also be consistent with God: whichever hypothesis a man adopts will fit experience equally well; neither one, so far as accounting for visible facts is concerned, works better than the other." (*The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 143.) "What a book," says Darwin, "a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low, and horribly cruel works of nature!" (Quoted by H. S. Coffin, *Some Christian Convictions*, p. 119.) "The famous physicist Helmholtz once said of the human eye: 'If an optician sent it to me as an instrument, I should send it back with reproaches for his carelessness and demand the return of my money.'" (Professor Lull, of Yale, in *Christianity and Modern Thought*, Yale University Press, 1924.)

[2] *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, finis* (italics mine). "There are many," says Dean Inge (*Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 16), "to whom nature is dumb, or to whom she only gives back their own thoughts, taking the colours, grave or gay, of their passing moods."

handiwork" is quoted as indicating that the presence of design in nature has been an actual historical source of religious belief in God; but that is not the interpretation of the words which will be found in any good commentary. "When psalmist or prophet," writes Sir George Adam Smith, "calls Israel to lift their eyes to the hills, or to behold how the heavens declare the glory of God, or to listen to that unbroken tradition, which day passes to day and night to night, of the knowledge of the Creator, it is not proofs to doubting minds which he offers: it is spiritual nourishment to hungry souls. These are not arguments—they are sacraments."[1] Certainly it is true that religion has its own interpretation of the facts of nature and its own new light to throw upon them; but the light is a light that has been kindled at another shrine than nature's. Certainly every religious man finds God present in nature; but that is only because he has already found Him present in his own soul. This is a point which we find again and again being made by that earliest of all critics of 'natural theology'—Blaise Pascal. From among many passages that might be quoted from the famous *Pensées* we select the following:

> "I wonder at the boldness with which these persons undertake to speak of God, in addressing their words to the irreligious. Their first chapter is to prove the Divinity by the works of nature. I should not be astonished at their undertaking if they addressed their discourse to believers, for it is certain that those who have faith alive in their hearts see at once that all that exists is nothing else than the work of the God whom they adore. But for those in whom this light is extinct, and in whom we desire to rekindle it, men destitute of faith and grace who, investigating with all their light whatever they see in nature which might lead them to this knowledge, find only clouds and darkness—to say to *them* that they need only look at the least of the things which surround them and they will see God plainly revealed, to give them as the sole proof of this great and important subject the course of the moon and of the planets, and to pretend that with such an argument we have completed the proof, is only to give them reason to suspect that the grounds of our faith are feeble indeed; and I know from reason and experience that nothing is better fitted to arouse in them contempt."[2]

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[1] *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. II, p. 90.

[2] *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, 242. *Cf.* also: "C'est une chose admirable, que jamais auteur canonique ne s'est servi de la nature pour prouver Dieu." (243)

To sum up, then, we are bound to conclude that the impartial scientific contemplation of the world of nature as it stands, while indeed seeming to point in the direction of living and even intelligent guidance of some sort, does not seem able of itself to suggest anything that could properly (as being of use to religion) be called belief in God; while on the other hand it does nothing to make nature seem incapable of being looked upon as God's world, if there should be any independent ground for believing that it is. "We cannot," concludes one of the best of recent scientific authorities, "reach any religious truth or conviction along scientific lines, but . . . a careful scientific description of Animate Nature is not inconsistent with a spiritual . . . interpretation."[1]

The Animistic or 'Idealistic' Argument Considered.

IV

Let us now examine the other (or first) half of Plato's proof. This, it will be remembered, starts out not from particular facts of nature but from the general presumption (based on our experience of the relation of our own minds to our own bodies) that there is Mind behind everything, mind being in its very nature prior to matter or, in Plato's own phrase, "soul older than body." Such a presumption is what is known to students of primitive culture as *animism*, and it is perhaps the earliest hypothesis ever put forward by human thought for the explanation of the phenomena of external nature.[2]

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[1] John Arthur Thomson's Gifford Lectures on *The System of Animate Nature*, vol. II, pp. 650–651. In a later volume entitled *Science and Religion* (1925) the same writer puts it thus: "Science has come to mean so much to man . . . that we cannot wonder at his desire to have it also as an aid to his faith. But this way lies disappointment. We cannot by scientific searching find out God. . . . It is not by science that we can pass from nature to nature's God. The pathway is that of religious experience, just as the pathway to the vision of beauty is that of æsthetic discipline." (P. 197.) It is exactly the conclusion of my own teacher of theology, Wilhelm Herrmann: "Die wunderbare Zweckmässigkeit der Natur hat für das Leben der Religion allerdings einen hohen Wert, weil sie den Frommen an den Reichtum seines Gottes erinnert und jedem Menschen die Unergründlichkeit des Wirklichen enthüllt. Aber der teleologische Beweis ist für die Begründung der Religion gänzlich wertlos."—*Dogmatik* (Gotha-Stuttgart, 1925), p. 7.

[2] I am glad to find the identity of Plato's thought with animism insisted on by that fine scholar, Söderblom, in his book, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 379. "Zweimal hat der Animismus epochemachend eingewirkt auf die Entwicklung der Gotteserkenntnis in der westlichen Kulturwelt. Das eine Mal in der furchtbaren, überwältigenden Gestalt, in welcher der göttliche Wille dem Mose entgegengetreten war. Das andere Mal in Platos Lehre von Gott und den göttlichen Wesen und Seelen, die mit Gottes reiner Geistigkeit verwandt sind."

It is well known that human religion joined hands with animism at a very early stage in its career and has ever since seemed to make common cause with it; and there is a sense in which the alliance is quite necessary to the life of religion and must continue to the end. There is therefore no question in our minds, as religious men, about the *conclusion* which Plato here seeks to establish. Every religious man believes, with the primitive animist and with Plato, that behind all things there is Mind and Will, and that therefore what may broadly be called the spiritualistic interpretation of the universe is the one true interpretation of it. The only question at issue is as to the precise nature of the grounds on which, for the religious man as such, this conclusion ultimately rests. According to Plato, as we have seen, it rests upon what he believes to be the inevitable results of an analysis of the relations of mind and matter as these are known to us in the case of our own souls and bodies. And in modern times, as we also saw, this attempt to base a spiritualistic and religious view of the world upon epistemological analysis has received further refinement at the hands, first of Bishop Berkeley, and then of Hegel and his followers. The fact is, however, that the more the argument is refined in an epistemological direction the less immediately and universally convincing does it seem to become. There are of course a few to whom the Berkeleian analysis of sense-perception seems quite undoubtedly correct, but there are at least as many to whom it seems quite undoubtedly wrong, and the large majority of us would probably decline to stake very much that is precious to us either upon its truth or upon its falsity. The issue between epistemological 'idealism' and epistemological 'realism' is still in every sense of the word an open issue in philosophy. It is true that the broader issue between 'idealism' (or, as it is here better termed, 'spiritualism') and 'naturalism' is not in the same sense open; for most of us *would* be willing to stake all that is precious to us, and our life itself, upon the general truth of the spiritualistic reading of things. But even here it is more than doubtful whether what really determines us in favour of spiritualism is any direct insight which we think ourselves to have into the essential mutual relations of matter and mind. Is it because we can directly see that "all agents are incorporeal" and that "we have no proof, either from experiment or reason, of any other agent or efficient cause than Mind or Spirit,"[1] that we believe this to be a Living Universe, ruled by a Living God? The trouble with such a ground of belief as is here suggested is that it immediately finds itself engaged in mortal combat with the unquestionably serious difficulties that we have in conceiving how the very piebald world we know can really be the "body" of a single Supreme and Perfect Mind. It is no doubt the evenly balanced nature of this combat which accounts for the constant tendency of progressive science towards a 'positivist' view of things and its traditional shyness before what Laplace called "the hypothesis of God."

The combat would perhaps always remain without certain issue if there did not come to the aid of the spiritualistic interpretation an ally possessed of a prowess all its own. What that ally is we have already[2] had some occasion to notice—it is nothing else than the driving power of moral and religious faith. The real strength of the spiritualistic (or idealistic) hypothesis during its long and noble philosophical career has lain in the fact that it does not, like the materialistic alternative, betray the claims of the deepest part of our natures. Even in Plato's own pages it is impossible not to feel that it is from this quarter that the most compelling urge to idealistic belief ultimately comes. It is hardly possible to read the movingly passionate appeal in the tenth book of the *Laws* without suspecting that, as he marshals his arguments in favour of the spiritual view of the world, he is omitting from express mention the consideration that actually, if only in a half-realised way, weighed most of all with him—the *moral* absurdity and intolerableness of a world that is without meaning or purpose or rational guidance and that accordingly stultifies the very idea of any spiritual effort on the part of ourselves, its denizens. We may remind ourselves again of Professor Pringle-Pattison's declaration that, "familiar with values in our own experience, we feel it impossible to conceive of anything devoid of value (such as an unconscious material system would be) as ultimately real," and that "it is this moral impossibility, rather than the speculative impossibility of a world unperceived or unthought of, that is the driving power of the idealistic argument." If this is true—and surely it is a truth which the whole present trend of thought in this matter is forcing us more and more to recognise—then the real strength of the spiritualistic position lies, not in the measure of justice it does to the empirically observed facts of the natural order of things, or to what we know of the relations of body and mind, or to the results of the epistemological analysis of sensation and perception, but in the justice it does to our sense of value. And that is to say that instead of religious faith being able to rely for its support on epistemological and cosmological idealism, such idealism must on the contrary rely for a major part of its own evidence upon something that is very like religious faith.

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[1] The sentences are purely Platonic, but are taken from Berkeley's *Siris*, 247, 154.

[2] *Supra*, ch. II, § III.

It must be concluded, therefore, that it is as wrong in principle, and as useless in fact, to make appeal to epistemological or cosmological idealism in support of religious truth as it is to make appeal to the evidences of design in nature. Each argument proves something, but what it proves is not enough to provide religion with even the most meagre of foundations. The truth is that we are quite unwarranted in utilising the religious term 'God' without further ado to denote the Supreme Soul to which the animistic hypothesis may be taken as pointing; for 'God' means not merely a Supreme Soul but a Supreme Soul who is good and who cares for man; and what animistic hypothesis can ever reach to such a Being as that? *The very most* that any abstract cosmological argument can be conceived as establishing is the existence of a Supreme Soul of some kind or other; *the very least* on which religion has ever managed to subsist, or could possibly manage to subsist, is the assured conviction that this Supreme Soul takes (or can be induced to take) some interest in our welfare and that His values and ours are not hopelessly diverse. Cosmological and epistemological idealism may thus be true, and yet religion may remain an empty dream.

As traditionally employed, the Speculative Method showed an almost complete blindness to this state of the case, and especially it was blind to the impossibility of proving the *goodness* of God by means of arguments drawn from the sensible world. Plato thought that the goodness of the Mind that moves the stars could be inferred from the perfect circularity of their orbits.

Aquinas' chapter, *That God is perfect in all respects*,[1] is hardly less bold in its claims. Paley writes:

> "The proof of the *divine goodness* rests upon two propositions: each, as we contend, capable of being made out by observations drawn from the appearances of nature. The first is, that, in a vast plurality of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is *beneficial*. The second that the Deity has superadded *pleasure*, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose, or when the purpose, so far as it was necessary, might have been effected by the operation of pain."[2]

In our own day, however, it has become usual for those who still follow a speculative method in theology to relinquish this position and, while still relying upon a Berkeleian analysis of sense-perception as their main proof of the *existence* of a Deity, to allow that it is impossible to establish His *goodness* without appeal to a wholly different order of evidence. Good examples of this kind of compromise may be found in the Gifford Lectures of Otto Pfleiderer, perhaps the most distinguished of recent representatives of the speculative school of theologians in Germany; and, within English scholarship, in a little book entitled *Philosophy and Religion* by the late Dean Rashdall.[3] This is how the former seeks to establish the existence of God:

> "The question how different subjects come to a corresponding image of the world can hardly be solved otherwise than by the assumption of a universal consciousness." "The agreement of our thinking with the being of the world rests on the fact that it is the reproduction of the creative thoughts of the Infinite Mind." "In short, the logical truth of the principle of sufficient reason presupposes that the ground and law of the temporal phenomena lie in a Divine Logos."[4]

The last sentence is surely more than mediæval in its temerity. Dean Rashdall is equally bold, but shows a worthier consciousness of the quaintness that is involved in making the faith of all the prophets, apostles, and martyrs thus stand or fall with the correctness of the Berkeleian analysis of perception. He writes:

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[1] *Quod Deus est universaliter perfectus* in the *Contra Gentiles*, *Lib.* I, *Cap.* XXVII.

[2] *Natural Theology*, ch. XXVI.

[3] Very much the same line is followed by Bishop Gore in his book on *Belief in God*, ch. III, "Grounds of Belief in God." Bishop Gore and Dean Rashdall probably both learned their idealism from T. H. Green at Oxford.

[4] *Philosophy and Development of Religion*, vol. I, pp. 142, 146, 152.

> "So far I have endeavoured to establish the existence of God by a line of thought which also leads to the position that matter has no independent existence apart from conscious mind, that at bottom nothing exists except minds and their experiences. Now I know that this is a line of thought which, to those who are unfamiliar with it, seems so paradoxical and extravagant that, even when a man does not see his way to reply to it, it will seldom produce immediate or permanent conviction the first time he becomes acquainted with it. It is for the most part only by a considerable course of habituation, extending over some years, that a man succeeds in thinking himself into the idealistic view of the Universe. And after all there are many minds—some of them, I must admit, not wanting in philosophic power—who never succeed in accomplishing that feat at all. Therefore, while I feel bound to assert that the clearest and most irrefragable argument for the existence of God is that which is supplied by the idealistic line of thought, I should be sorry to have to admit that a man cannot be a Theist, or that he cannot be a Theist on reasonable grounds, without first being an Idealist. From my own point of view most of the other reasons for believing in God resolve themselves into idealistic arguments imperfectly thought out. But they may be very good arguments, so far as they go, even when they are not thought out to what seem to me their logical consequences."[1]

But while these writers thus mainly rely for their assurance of God's reality upon epistemological idealism, they are both well aware that they cannot learn anything about God's character, and consequently cannot reach any assurance that could in any wise serve as a working basis for religion, without having resort to a further source of evidence. All (they allow) that the idealistic argument, taken by itself, can give us is a Supreme Mind of some sort; but that that Mind possesses those attributes of "holiness, justice, goodness, and truth" which would alone make it worthy to be called God, we can know only from the witness of our own moral consciousness.

Such a position certainly marks an advance on Plato and Aquinas and Paley, and yet it is difficult not to feel that it partakes of the nature of compromise. For if the 'moral argument' can establish the goodness of God, then surely it must, *a fortiori*, be sufficient to establish His existence. There is thus no need to have resort to a purely theoretical argument for the first step in our proof, the one argument from our moral experience being, if valid at all, entirely adequate to take both steps at once. That, of course, was Kant's view. And if it be asked whether it is not all to the good to have the existence of God established by a theoretical argument *as well as* by a moral one, even though the goodness of God can be established by the moral one alone, our answer must surely (like Kant's) be unhesitatingly in the negative. It could be of no advantage to religion were the impression to gain ground that the question of the existence of God is connected with the fate of any philosophical hypothesis that is so emphatically, and that is likely to be so perennially, of the nature of an open question as the Berkeleian analysis of perception. And it is good to know that even if the idealists are wrong and the realists right, the *true* grounds of belief in God remain quite unaffected. Moreover, as we shall presently have occasion to show at greater length, the argument from the moral consciousness has this quite decisive advantage over any purely theoretical argument—that it represents the *actual* source from which religious faith springs, and has always sprung, in the heart of man.

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[1] *Philosophy and Religion* (1909), pp. 19–20.

General Objections to the Speculative Method

V

It has seemed well to devote this share of our attention to the two most notable of the arguments that have traditionally been in the armoury of the speculative apologetic. We must now proceed, however, to what is after all more important and decisive, namely, a statement of the *general* objections that have recently come to be felt against this whole approach to the theological problem and this whole attempt to buttress religious faith by casting about for independent substantiation of what, on the surface, seem to be its most noteworthy assertions. "As is well known," says Hegel in his *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, "the effect of the criticism directed by Kant against the metaphysical proofs of the existence of God has been that these arguments have been abandoned, and that they are no longer mentioned in any scientific treatise on the subject; in fact, one is almost ashamed to adduce them at all."[1] Yet the real reason for this result lies not in the efficacy of Kant's detailed demolition of the three particular arguments marshalled by Wolf (for that demolition, as Hegel pointed out, had its own weaknesses) but rather in his massive demonstration of the fundamental wrong-headedness of this whole approach to the question of the truth of religion. As he himself put it (perhaps a little too epigrammatically), the great concern of his philosophical career was to "abolish knowledge in order to make room for faith";[1] or, as we may venture to paraphrase, it was to exhibit the uselessness and the impossibility of adducing external proofs of religion, and by so doing to lead men to examine more attentively the interior witness of faith itself. Thus in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the criticism of Wolf's arguments is followed by an even more important section entitled "Critique of All Theology Based Upon the Speculative Principles of Reason."

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[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, English transl., vol. III, pp. 237–238. Hegel, of course, did not himself share the view that Kant's criticism of these arguments was final.

It should further be noted that the objections and difficulties now to be enumerated apply not only to that first chapter of Natural Theology, its proofs of the existence of God, but also to the manner in which it goes about to prove other characteristic beliefs of religion, such as the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. What we are now criticising is the whole idea that the question of the truth of religion is to be settled by showing that a number of its most representative beliefs may be arrived at by independent scientific and metaphysical investigation.

(*a*) The first difficulty which we feel regarding this procedure arises from the clear realisation that if the *valid* grounds for believing in God's existence are different from the grounds which have actually led the world to believe in it, then it is only by an accident of coincidence that there is anything in the world's faith at all. On this view it is by the merest luck that religion has hit upon this very significant and vital truth, and the religious man finds himself in the doubtful position of a schoolboy who is fortunate enough to get the answer to his sum right, though his working-out was wrong. The truth is, however, that in religion, even more surely than in arithmetic, it would, in the last resort, have been better to have had the answer wrong too. For in such a matter as religion to hit upon the truth by chance, or on wrong grounds, is not really to hit upon the *truth* at all. Religion is essentially a trust in an unseen order of things, and if that trust has had no solid basis in the soul's experience, then the religion of mankind has been a delusion—a delusion that were no less hollow at heart even if some of the beliefs to which it led should happen to have been true.

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[1] *Critique of Pure Reason*, preface to 2nd ed.

We are bound to feel, then, that if the interior sources of religious assurance were to be discredited and replaced by so-called 'philosophical' arguments, we should—and indeed *ought* to—lose our interest in religion altogether and allow philosophy to take its place. Yet it is strange how far this state of matters is from being evident to many of our theologians to-day. The late Dean Rashdall, for instance, seemed to be totally unaware of any tendency to scepticism when he suggested that historic religion need not in the first place have rested upon any true insight into the nature of things at all. In his own words:

> "It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the process by which psychologically a man arrives at a religious or other truth and the reasons which make it true. . . . The religious belief of the vast majority of persons has always rested, and must always rest, very largely upon tradition, education, environment, authority of one kind or another—authority supported or confirmed by a very varying measure of independent reflection or experience. . . . A belief which arose at first entirely without logical justification, or it may be on intellectual grounds subsequently discovered to be false, may nevertheless be one which can and does justify itself to the reflective interest of the person himself or of other persons. And many new, true, and valuable beliefs have undoubtedly come into the world in this way."[1]

There is hardly any statement contained in that passage which we do not feel obliged to challenge. Take the last, for instance. To suggest that the number of problems, the correct solutions of which were first arrived at by means of an erroneous 'working-out' is in any way considerable, or that this dunce's luck is to be seriously reckoned with as an avenue to truth, is scarcely less than absurd. And the whole passage is based upon what seems to be a mistaken view, though it is at the present time a not uncommon view, of the part played by authority in religious belief. Obviously it is impossible that tradition or authority should ever *give rise* to any belief whatsoever—all they can do is to help in the propagation of beliefs that have already arisen. Are we, then, to suggest that the ultimate origins of religious beliefs are shrouded in prehistoric mystery, but that, once they happened to arise, their general acceptance and continued propagation was guaranteed by the tendency to traditionalism in the human mind? This would mean that it is of little or no importance to ask what it was that first suggested to mankind the belief in God, because the ground on which the race as a whole now believes in God has nothing to do with this original source of the belief, but is merely the fact that *our forefathers asserted it.* A very bald statement of this view may be found in Professor J. B. Pratt's *Psychology of Religious Belief.* Speaking of the religion of primitive peoples, he has the following passage:

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[1] *Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 134–135.

> "Having as yet comparatively little power of thought and slight experience of the kind that prompts doubt, primitive men, like other children, are extremely credulous, and tend to accept, as a matter of course, whatever is presented to them. To doubt the traditions of the tribe that have been handed down through the generations and taught them by their parents does not occur to them. Their belief is thus one of authority in the first sense of the word. . . . The teaching of the ancestors is accepted simply because presented. The process is identical with that of the beliefs of our own childhood. Thus myths about spirits and gods, once started, are handed down from father to son, and are believed implicitly because it has never occurred to them that doubt is possible."[1]

"*Once started*"—but he does not tell us how they started. In his opening pages Professor Pratt announces that the aim of his book is to answer the question why men have come to believe, and why they still believe, in God. But in his historical-psychological discussion he *begins* with the mere traditionalism described in the above passage—the Religion of Primitive Credulity, as he calls it. Not only does he give no account of an earlier stage but he seems to deny that there was any earlier stage. Yet we cannot refrain from asking, How did this belief in gods, which Primitive Credulity so easily perpetuated, first get *started?* And we are led to suspect that it can only have arisen from some deep-seated impulse of a definitely religious character, and that it is this religious impulse, and not the supposed pure traditionalism which succeeded it, that represents the earliest ground of faith. Professor Pratt, on the other hand, seems to suggest that belief in God got *started* by some accident which was itself of no religious interest or significance.

But that is not all; for, truth to tell, we cannot on any terms accept the distinction which is implied in Professor Pratt's saying that the beliefs about the gods, "once started," are afterwards "accepted simply because presented." Though it was not so intended, this declaration really amounts to the extremest form of religious scepticism; for what it asserts is virtually that the faith of mankind started by accident and was then perpetuated by credulity. But surely the only reasonable view is that the impulse from which religion first started has persisted throughout its history—and still persists. There never has been a religion of *pure* credulity, a *purely* authoritatarian faith. Tradition has always been supported by some deeper sanction than mere antiquity and paternalism, and this deeper sanction can be none other than the continuance of the impulse that originally gave rise to the faith which has now become traditionalised. To say, as is often unthinkingly done, that the religion of the people is based on mere acceptance of tradition is to imply that the people would be as ready to believe and to espouse the most irresponsible fabrication about what lies beyond the Veil as they have shown themselves ready to believe and to espouse the particular type of outlook for which religion has always stood. It is to imply that the people of our own time would be as ready to espouse, and as reluctant to part with, the crassest materialism as they have shown themselves ready to espouse and reluctant to part with the Christian Gospel—so long as only it were taught them by their mothers or Sunday-school teachers, by sovereign pontiff or sacred book. But there are two hard facts which such a view can never succeed in explaining: first, that apparently it is the *same* basic belief about the ultimate meaning of things that always gets 'started' among men of every race and under every sky; and, secondly, that this belief is one that unquestionably finds a deep response in the spiritual natures of us all. It may also be noted that if the view represented by Dean Rashdall and Professor Pratt is correct—if, that is to say, tradition and authority constitute the main ground of the religious belief of "the vast majority of persons"—then it must follow that a pure authoritatarianism is the only true theology; for in such a case the historic faith of humanity as a whole, the faith by which the world has lived, could be effectively defended in no other way than by arguing that whatever is traditional—*quod*

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus—is true, and that there is no other standard of truth.

But let us not thus insult the faith of our fellow-men or the faith of the fathers of our race by denying that it rests, and has always rested, on a real spiritual insight. Tradition and authority may often largely determine the particular form which faith assumes in an individual case; they do not at all determine the fundamental affirmation which is common to all its forms. On a first hasty view tradition may seem to account for everything in the religion of the people about us; but after deeper observation and reflection we begin to see that tradition could have done very little indeed if those who accept the tradition had no share in the insight which first started it on its way. As the sixteenth-century Reformers were so fond of pointing out, the authority of Church and sacred book would count for very little if the truth they proclaimed were not, in all main things, directly attested by the *testimonium spiritus sancti* in the hearts of all believers.

(*b*) The second objection which we have to raise against the speculative method is closely allied to these considerations, and is this: that it seems to represent religion not as a kind of insight into reality—a characteristic way of grasping it—but as a body of propositions or doctrines. It proceeds on the assumption that the proper way to defend religion is to do all that can be done to establish the truth of certain propositions about a supramundane Person; and the supposition would be correct if we could feel that religion were really only another name for the totality of such propositions. The fact is, however, that the mere possession of true propositions, taken by themselves and without regard to how they were come by, is of extraordinarily little value in such a sphere as religion. To put it paradoxically—meeting a paradox by a paradox—we might say that it is more important in religion that we should have the right reasons for such beliefs as we do hold than that the beliefs we hold should be the right ones. A less adequate creed based on inward conviction is better than a more adequate creed learned by rote; and whenever spiritual religion has been a living force, this has been recognised. Mere blind assent to truths learned by rote, or accepted on authority, may be good enough in some of the more purely factual branches of knowledge, but it is rather a hindrance than a help in the realm of the fundamental faith by which the soul of man lives. This is a realm in which the crucial question must always be: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee . . .?" Of course purely second-hand religion is a thing that may exist in individual cases and that has often in some degree threatened whole communities and epochs, but it is never a normal or a healthy phenomenon. If the priests have too frequently winked at it, the prophets have always condemned it. In the seventeenth century William Penn wrote:

> "It is a sad reflection that many men have hardly *any religion at all*, and most men have none of their own; for that which is the religion of their education, and not of their judgment, is the religion of *another* and not theirs. To have religion upon authority, and not upon conviction, is like a Finger Watch, to be set forward or backward, as he pleases that has it in his keeping. It is a preposterous thing that men can venture their souls where they will not venture their money; for they will take their religion upon trust, but not trust a *Synod* about the goodness of half a crown."[1]

If the founder of Pennsylvania is here, in true Quaker fashion, over-estimating the influence of traditionalism in the England of his day, he is nevertheless right in the judgment that he passes upon traditionalism as a whole. True religion exists only so far as "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."[2]

The truth is that religion is not a mere set of conclusions about the Unseen World—conclusions in which the premises by means of which they have been arrived at play no constitutive part, but much rather a going-out of the human soul towards that world. It is not a special group of propositions but a special kind of insight and of trust. A man may give his assent to all the propositions that we are accustomed to regard as most characteristic of religion, and yet he may himself be entirely without religion: it all depends on how he came by this doctrinal knowledge. Herrmann is surely right when, following Luther, he says that to have religion is to have saving faith, and that saving faith is not in the first instance a *notitia* and *assensus*, a knowledge of and assent to propositions (though these undoubtedly grow out of it), but rather a *fiducia*, a whole-hearted trust in, and reliance upon, the Eternal Goodness.[1] As it has very pointedly been put by another: "Man did not become religious when he heard that there were gods."[2]

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[1] *Some Fruits of Solitude*, 522–524.

[2] Romans 8 : 16.

(*c*) Thus there comes into view a third weakness which is inherent in natural or speculative theology, namely, the kind of beliefs which it inevitably tends to select as forming the central citadel of religious conviction. The belief that has almost unanimously been selected as being the most fundamentally important of all is the belief "that a Supreme Being exists." Towards the establishment of this belief the speculative apologetic has often devoted practically the whole of its energy. And there may still be some to whom it seems to go without saying that the affirmation of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence is both the first and the central thing in religion.

Nevertheless such a view offers many pitfalls for the unwary. To begin with, there is the fallacy, so constantly committed by the theology of the past, of separating in an entirely artificial way the question of God's existence from that of His nature. The procedure of natural theology has indeed often been of such a kind as to give rise to the impression that there can be no serious question as to what manner of being God must be, *if* He exists; the only question being whether a supramundane being exists at all. It is true that in actual fact, as Kant so clearly saw, the nature of the being whose existence could be supposed to be established varied according to the kind of argument used to establish it; so that each of the traditional theistic arguments really proves the existence of a different kind of being. But those who used the arguments never reflected upon this, for they tended rather to take it for granted that whatever supramundane being could be shown to exist must be identical with the object of religious worship. This separation of the question of God's nature from that of His existence is, of course, but one side of that other fallacious separation that we have been so much concerned with—the separation of the results of religious insight from its grounds. And either fallacy must be met with the same kind of question. Why, we must ask, should faith's account of *what* God is be so unquestionably accepted when faith's grounds for affirming *that* He is are passed by in scorn?

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[1] See Herrmann's *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., 3d ed., pp. 217 ff.

[2] A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 272.

The true emphasis at this point seems to be as nearly as possible the reverse of that with which speculative theology, from Plato downward, has familiarised us. The capital issue for religion is not really whether there exists a supramundane power. That *some* kind of supramundane power exists is not open to reasonable doubt. The only really vital question is as to what this power is like. Is it an "Unknowable"? Is it an "iron system of natural law"? Is it an *élan vital?* Or is it God? What the ultimate power at the back of things *is like*—that is the problem which has stirred the soul of man in all ages, and it is in these terms that theology should state its problem too.

But we must go a step further in our criticism. We must insist that not even the question whether the ultimate power is of the nature of *conscious spirit* (whether, as Plato would say, it is *psyche* and *nous*) brings us to the real starting-point of religious faith. As has frequently been pointed out, there is nothing essentially and necessarily religious about the mere belief in the existence of a superhuman soul or souls. Even if we succeeded in putting beyond all reasonable question the existence of such beings, it would still remain to be proved that there is any gain in fellowship with them, or any obligation on our part to worship them. Belief in the existence of supra-cosmic spirits is thus not really the first step in faith, however much it may seem to be. The first step in faith, its true quintessence, is something much more like a trust that the whole scheme of things will not play us false, that our deepest natures are not irretrievably out of tune with the deepest nature of That which holds us in its power, and that there is therefore an available way of salvation from the apparent vanity and uncertainty of life. Genetically considered, the belief in the holiness and worthiness of ultimate reality is even more deep-seated in world-religion than is the belief in its psychic and conscious character.[1] It is true that, even within the modern period, this truth was for a time obscured from us by the confident assertions of a great scholar, E. B. Tylor (to whom we owe both the word 'animism' and the realisation of the determinative part it plays in the outlook of primitive peoples), that religion first appears in the world as a product of the animistic tendency. This is a question which we shall have to discuss more fully in a later chapter, but meanwhile it may be said that it is now widely agreed by students of human beginnings that Tylor was wrong. Religion undoubtedly made alliance with the animistic world-view at a very early stage in its history, and the alliance has continued ever since; but animism is not itself in any way a religious habit of mind, and it is possible that religion is much older than it. "The attempt to regard spirits and gods as the distinctive mark of religion and their worship as its *conditio sine qua non,*" says Söderblom in his admirable book on primitive religion, "comes to grief before the fact that exactly the same rites are practised in the same way and with the same effects without being referred to a deity, before men come to look upon them as adoration or sacrifice in the proper sense."[1] "If a man holds nothing sacred," he says again, "he is not religious, even if he allows a place for the idea of God in his view of the world."[2]

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[1] There is a certain correspondence, worth inquiring into, between this fact and certain tendencies in modern psychology. "Goodness rather than consciousness," says Professor E. G. Spaulding, of Princeton, "is, to my way of thinking, the fundamental characteristic of what I mean by the spiritual."—In *Christianity and Modern Thought* (Yale Univ. Press, 1924), p. 73.

Next to the establishment of God's existence, the speculative apologetic perhaps devoted most attention to the establishment of the immortality of the human soul. The two beliefs were regarded as largely independent of one another, as two separate beliefs, and as therefore to be reached by two wholly different lines of argument. Here again there is a false emphasis. For, in the first place, religion must be believed to stand, at the heart of it, for a single central conviction rather than for two or three or many; for one great act of faith rather than for a list of doctrines. And in the second place, it is a mistake to suppose that the direct and primary interest of religion with reference to human destiny is in the bare fact of another life beyond the grave. Belief in a future existence need not, as such, have anything religious about it at all. It is true, certainly, that it is religion which has been responsible for every vital assurance of immortality that has hitherto appeared in the world; but there are always a few in our midst who sincerely think that scientific investigation quite independently points in the same direction; so that it is entirely possible for a man to hold that there is nothing at all in religion and yet to look forward on purely scientific grounds to a dreary second term of life.[1] What religion is interested in is not mere continuance as such, but rather the assurance that those values which we have most learned to prize, and have attained by so much labour and pain, will not be lost but will really count for something in the end. And it is only because most of us are unable to conceive how, if death be the end of all, this can really be, that immortality has come to be an article of our creed at all. But if, as a few among us nowadays seem to think, it is really possible that all that is of value in our lives and personalities and societies may be conserved in some other way than through individual continuance, then spiritual religion must cease to be dogmatic about the soul's immortality.

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[1] *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 200

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

As has already been said, the true principle on which to work is that *theology should begin where faith itself begins* and follow religion's own *ordo cognoscendi.* The artificiality of natural theology consisted very largely in its neglect of this principle. Those affirmations which it made to seem prior in evidence now appear to us to be comparatively late and advanced results of faith's insight, while the affirmations with which faith appears to us to begin were seldom reached by it at all. Possibly the first writer to call attention to this fact was David Hume, whose very penetrating *Natural History of Religion* is largely concerned with it. The traditional theistic proofs, Hume points out, seem to prove theism *forthwith;* whereas the historical faith of mankind began with polytheism, and was able to advance from polytheism to theism only as the result of a further (and a very arduous and dearly won) forward step in religious insight.[2]

(*d*) We pass finally to a fourth objection which must be raised against the speculative procedure, namely, the objection we have to the quarter to which it asks us to go for our religious assurance. The trouble with the old authoritatarian theology had been that it seemed to make the faith of the people a purely second-hand religion. It allowed the common man little direct insight of his own, urging him rather to accept the testimony of others that his faith was well founded. He was asked to believe on the authority of apostle, ecumenical decision, supreme pontiff, and sacred book. Now natural theology originated in an attempt to remedy this situation and to substitute direct insight for mere acceptance of tradition or of somebody else's word. So far as the trained scholar was concerned, it may with some plausibility claim to have brought this attempt to a successful issue. Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and a few others did at least *seem* to have attained, by means of pure speculation, to the desired state of seeing for themselves that some of the things affirmed by tradition were really true; and to that extent they could dispense with the tradition and rely only on their own insight. But what they so seldom realised was that the common man was now even worse off than before, because now, instead of being referred to the authority of apostles, prophets and priests, Church councils and sacred books, he was referred rather to the authority of scientists and metaphysicians—of astronomers, biologists, epistemologists, logicians! And this, not for his grammar or his arithmetic or his medicine, but for the faith by which his soul lived! It was bad enough, when one sought for assurance of the Divine, to be referred to the authority of a Paul or an Athanasius. But it is immeasurably worse to be referred to the authority of some experimental scientist or some professor of metaphysics. And yet for the large majority of mankind, to whom the ability and opportunity to attain to a first-hand critical understanding of science and metaphysics is as little given as is the pontifical gift of infallible insight, that is precisely what it comes to. This common defect of rationalism and traditionalism is one of the things that have been so much insisted on by the Ritschlian theologians, and there can be little doubt that they have carried their point.

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[1] The late Dr. J. M. E. McTaggart firmly believed in immortality on grounds of a purely theoretical and speculative character but had no belief in God.

[2] See *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary,* ed. Green and Grose, vol. II, pp. 309–319.

A sufficiently grave difficulty in grounding religion upon the results of scientific and metaphysical investigation is, of course, already to be found in the fact that such investigation does not seem able to reach a degree either of certainty or of finality that is sufficient to allow religion to proceed. Religion has always claimed to offer man a knowledge of God which is, in its own way, and so far as it goes, of a very compelling certainty; a knowledge so insistent, so inescapable, as to constitute a most imperious claim on every human soul. One of the most celebrated of the speculative apologists, being shrewdly aware that nothing like absolute certainty could be reached along speculative lines, once found refuge in the view that, as he put it, "probability is the guide of life"; but it is certain that it has never been the guide of historical religion. Men do not stake their lives on a probability; yet there has never been an age in which men have not been willing to stake their lives—aye, and more than their lives—on the fundamental truth of their religious convictions. And that alone is enough to make it plain that religion rests on some insight to which there attaches an altogether different and more fundamental order of certainty than that attaching to Paley's argument from design or Berkeley's analysis of sense-perception; for not many of us would be willing to stake our lives on the correctness of these. Dean Rashdall, it is true, was not afraid to say that he felt "bound to assert that the clearest and most irrefragable argument for the existence of God is that which is supplied by the idealistic line of thought"[1]—meaning thereby the epistemological idealism of Berkeley. But there are others who will feel that if religion must wait, before being sure of God, until the epistemologists have agreed even as to their first principles, it is not a thing about which they need very seriously trouble themselves.

Nevertheless these considerations, serious as they are, do not really bring us to the core of the difficulty we are now endeavouring to express. For the real and most deep-seated paradox in the traditional speculative procedure lies, not in the fact that it makes religious assurance to rest on scientific and metaphysical conclusions which we feel to be hazardous and uncertain, but in the fact that it makes it rest on scientific and metaphysical conclusions of any kind whatsoever. No view of religion can possibly be correct which makes it depend on learned and scientific inquiry; for history shows that those members of our race who are accounted as having possessed the surest insight into religious truth could boast of little learning and of no science at all. "The basis of our faith," says Herrmann, in words which might be taken as the first axiom of any true theology, "must be grasped in the same independent fashion by learned and unlearned, by each for himself."[2]

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[1] See the passage quoted on p. 92 *supra*.

[2] *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., 3d. ed., p. 76.

Such then are the difficulties which we feel to be inherent in the speculative approach to the theological problem. There is, it is true, one way in which an attempt might be made to escape them: it might be contended that to support religious conviction by means of arguments drawn from the sphere of natural science and metaphysics is not, after all, to support it by external buttresses, because it is out of a more intuitive and immediate consciousness of these very arguments that religious conviction originally arose in the racial mind and still arises in the mind of the ordinary Christian man or woman. It would, no doubt, be out of the question to put forward such a claim for *some* of the traditional speculative proofs—for the ontological argument, for instance, and for the Berkeleian form of the idealistic argument. But it might with some degree of plausibility be contended that human religion took its rise, partly out of the animistic tendency to believe that all things in the last resort have soul in them, and partly out of the difficulty of explaining the apparent order and design of external nature without reference to a Supreme Architect of the world. That such an account of the interior roots of religious conviction is historically and psychologically unsound we must leave it to our later detailed inquiry into the nature of the religious consciousness to prove.[1] Meanwhile, however, it may be said that it is only rarely, and then only half-heartedly, that such a claim has been put forward. What is characteristic of rationalism is rather the total eclipsing of all interest in the interior sources of belief by the impatient quest for some kind of proof. And when, instead of inquiring why mankind actually believes in God, theology sets out rather to inquire what evidence it can itself now light upon in favour of such a belief, there is of course no guaranty that the evidences it discovers will be those which, psychologically regarded, lie behind the historical emergence and continuance of the belief itself.

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[1] See part II, ch. II, *infra.* But it may here be remarked that the view that belief in God arose out of the perception of design in nature is directly disproved by the fact that the world believed in God long before it ever occurred to it to regard Him as the responsible author of nature. The Israelite tribes, for instance, believed in Yahweh for centuries before they thought of attributing to Him the creation of the world.

CHAPTER V

"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION" AND THE HISTORICAL "SCIENCE OF RELIGION" IN THEIR RELATION TO THE THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Origin of the Tendencies Represented by two Names.

I

In the two preceding chapters we have been especially concerned to oppose two false tendencies that have done much to vitiate the systematic study of religion in the past—the tendency to dissociate the logical justification of faith from the interior sources of its own assurance, and the tendency to dissociate the grounds and fundamental utterances of the faith of one's own religious communion from those of the faith of mankind as a whole. There is one result which, in a scientific age, is almost bound to follow on the appearance in theology of either of these two dissociations, and in our own age it is difficult to say which of the two has contributed more to it. There is almost bound to arise, and as a matter of fact there has arisen, a *separate* study of the regions which theology thus excludes from its purview. If the text-books of systematic theology confine their vision to the Christian world, if they deal only with the sources and the essential nature of the Christian faith and create the impression that these are entirely *sui generis*, then there is clearly a further question left over for separate discussion—the question as to the grounds and real nature of the faith in God which is to be found almost everywhere in the greater world outside the frontiers of Christendom. And similarly, if theology makes an abrupt distinction between "the process by which psychologically a man arrives at a religious truth . . . and the reasons which make it true"[1]; if, that is, it sets out rather to search for new and better grounds for religious faith than carefully to analyse the grounds from which faith actually takes its rise and on which it has always historically been based; then the scientific temper will certainly press for a separate answer to this latter question and will ask: "What is it that *actually* leads men, and has always led them, to be so sure that the universe is under the governance of a just or friendly Power, and that,

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[1] Dean Rashdall, as quoted in the foregoing chapter.

> '. . . when the city sleeps,
> When all the cries are still,
> The stars and heavenly deeps
> Work out a perfect will . . .'?"

There have thus come into vogue during the last half-century two new approaches to the study of religion, known respectively as the (Historical) Science of Religion and the Psychology of Religion, and developed for the most part in entire independence of the traditional theology and by researchers who did not regard themselves as professionally trained theologians or (in a great many cases) as working in the service of any organised religion or church.

Looked at from the point of view of the older theology from which they are departures, the two new studies may seem to be separate enough from one another, the one dealing with the neglected field of extra-Christian faith, the other with the neglected field of the actual processes inspiring faith in general. But if we regard them in themselves, it is by no means so easy to see what the distinction between them is.[1] We might perhaps say that the Psychology of Religion concerns itself with individual history and the Historical Science of Religion with racial history; and we might add that since the most inward experiences of religion are individual experiences, whereas its outward expressions naturally clothe themselves in social forms, the interest of the former study is mainly in interior states of the religious mind, while the interest of the latter is in religious cults and institutions and public creeds. This principle of division has often served as a practical basis of research,[2] and it probably reflects accurately enough what is in the mind of the wider reading public as to the distinction between the two disciplines. But there are many signs that among the experts it is gradually breaking down. The psychologists are recognising that they must concern themselves, not merely with individual, but also with social and racial experience, and so we hear more and more of social psychology, of *Völkerpsychologie* and of *la psychologie des foules;* they are recognising also that they must not content themselves with analysing one specific type of religious consciousness, but must take into account the experience of the fetich-worshipper, the Druid, the Bacchanal, the Brahman, the Yogi, and the Sufi, as well as that of the twentieth-century Protestant. And at the same time the historians are recognising that the true significance of the public development of religion in rite and rule can be understood and investigated only in the light of the inward experiences that lie behind it. A few writers have tried to save the distinction between the two studies by emphasising the fact that in the case of the historical study we are dealing with the chronological order of development. But while there is undoubtedly an element of truth in this view of the matter, it is impossible to regard it as finally solving the problem, because (*a*) the students of the Historical Science of Religion have shown themselves anything but willing to confine themselves to the merely chronological seriation of events, and have conceived themselves as having much rather to do with the logic of development, and (*b*) if psychology is held not to be concerned with the chronological order, then it is difficult to see with what order it can be concerned, if not with this same *logical* one. The result is, as has been said, that among the experts the two studies are beginning to fuse into one.[1]

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[1] Emil Brunner says: "Der Zwillingsbruder des Psychologismus ist der Historismus." (*Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*, 2 und 3 Aufl., p. 105.)

[2] William James writes: "If the inquiry be psychological, not religious institutions, but rather religious feelings and religious impulses must be its subject." (*Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 3.) Again: "In these lectures I propose to ignore the institutional branch entirely, to say nothing of the ecclesiastical organisation, to consider as little as possible the systematic theology and the ideas about the gods themselves, and to confine myself as far as I can to personal religion pure and simple." (P. 29.) But as his book proceeds, it becomes increasingly clear that James is not intending to keep his own study separate from the general and historical 'science of religion.'

To a critique of the two studies in question as hitherto carried on, and especially to an attempt to ascertain the real nature and extent of the contribution which they have to make to the general theological inquiry, the present chapter will be devoted.

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[1] Already with reference to such a book as Irving King's *The Development of Religion* it was impossible to answer the question whether it dealt with the psychological or the historical issue.

II The Place of Historiography in the Theological Enquiry

II

Of the twin studies the Historical Science of Religion is the older and it will be convenient to consider it first. As has been indicated, its distinguishing feature lies in the immensely increased interest which it manifests in the diversity of human religion and particularly in the vast field of it which lies outwith the pale of the Hebrew-Christian development.

The beginnings of the scientific interest in the diversity of human religion go back to the ancient Greeks. Indeed the very first of the Greek thinkers to show any scientific interest in religion at all—Xenophanes of Colophon—cast his glance outside the faith of his own race. "The Ethiopians," he is reported to have said, "make their gods black and flat-nosed, the Thracians give theirs blue eyes and red hair"[1]; and on that he based the generalisation that all men tend to conceive of their gods as being like themselves. He is also said to have "suggested to the Egyptians that if they believed those they worshipped to be gods, they should not lament for them, and if they lamented for them, they should not believe them to be gods."[2] In these utterances, fragmentary as they are, the true scientific temper is already clearly discernible. But it was only after Alexander the Great had united in one empire a great diversity of peoples that it was possible for a Greek to have either a very exact knowledge of, or a very sympathetic attitude towards, the cults of the 'barbarians.' Only, therefore, after 300 B. C.—and even then mainly among the Stoics who, of all the schools of thought, best succeeded in accommodating their philosophy to the new conditions and ideals and in becoming (to use their own word, coined for the occasion) truly "cosmopolitan" in their attitude—was the scientific study of other religious systems than one's own really initiated in a systematic way. Above all Chrysippus (280–206 B. C.), a real spade-worker in many fields, seems to have been at great pains to collect and systematise the phenomena of the various religious cults to which he had any access. Cicero says:

> "The Egyptians embalm their dead and keep them in their houses; the Persians dress theirs over with wax, that they may preserve their

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[1] Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Fr. 14.

[2] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 70.

> bodies as long as possible. It is customary with the Magi to bury none of their order unless they have been first torn by dogs. In Hyrcania the people maintain dogs for the public use; their nobles have their own; we know they have a good breed of dogs; but every one, according to his ability, provides himself with some, in order to be torn by them; and they hold that to be the best interment. *Chrysippus, who is a painstaking student of every kind of history, has collected many other things of this kind*, but some of them are so offensive as not to admit of being repeated."[1]

The cults of the different races were referred to by the Stoics as the various *political* (*i. e.*, connected with a particular *polis*) or *positive* (*thetikos, i. e.*, laid down by custom and law) cults, but they soon discovered that there were certain beliefs common to all cults, *omnibus innata et in animo quasi insculpta*,[2] and these constituted what they called *natural* religion—thus originating the well-known phrase. During the three following centuries there grew up in this field a very extensive literature, scores of volumes being published with such titles as *Concerning Oracles, Concerning Divination, Concerning Prophetic Dreams,* and the like. About the beginning of the Christian era scholars like Panætius, Posidonius, Plutarch, Scævola, and Varro were actively carrying on this tradition. We still have fair examples of such literature preserved to us in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and *De Divinatione,* and perhaps above all in Plutarch's praiseworthy little treatise *Concerning Isis and Osiris.*

And then the scientific interest in other cults than one's own seems to have suffered almost total eclipse for fifteen hundred years. At no period during the Christian centuries prior to the Renaissance did the Christian scholars even approach the scant measure of the Stoics' grasp of the relation of "the religions" to "religion." True, the scholastic doctors were rather fond of engaging in a sort of dialectical thrust-and-parry with an imaginary Jew or Saracen or sometimes even with an imaginary pagan. But on the whole the Middle Ages preferred the sword to dialectics when dealing with such opponents. No mediæval attempt to join issue with non-Christian faiths is more competent than the *Summa contra Gentiles* of St. Thomas, yet the measure of real acquaintance with such faiths which its pages reveal is of the very slightest. Indeed if anything approaching breadth of vision and of sympathy in this region was anywhere kept alive during the Middle Ages, it was rather among Mohammedan than among Christian scholars. Averroës, in this matter, sees much deeper than St. Thomas. And this will not surprise us when we remember how certain other sciences were kept alive in the Moslem world when Christendom had almost extinguished them by neglect.[1]

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[1] *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 45. The italics, of course, are my own.

[2] Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, II, 5.

It was not until after the Renaissance that matters began to change; and when they did change, what happened was simply that the thread of Stoic investigation was taken up at the point where it had been dropped fifteen centuries before. The first significant modern treatise dealing exclusively with the phenomenon of religious diversity is Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Religione Gentilium* (published posthumously in 1663), and it cannot be held to have done more than produce the line of the Stoic development a very little further than the Stoics themselves had been able to draw it. Noteworthy progress was, however, made within the next hundred and fifty years, the names of Spinoza, Hume, Lessing, Herder and Hegel each standing for a significant step forward of one kind or another.

Yet it was not until the nineteenth century was well advanced that the new thing really came—that new thing which marked the first clear advance on Greek thought in this region. The rise of modern historical research[1] immediately seemed to put out of date all that had previously been written about the racial diversities of religious belief and worship. Now for the first time there was some chance of knowing what the facts really were. From among the pioneers in the application of modern historical methods to the investigation of the religious systems of the world we may select the leading names of Max Müller in England, Tiele in Holland, and Réville in France; but very soon the number of first-rank researchers became so great that it would be almost invidious to select a few for special mention.

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[1] "In science, indeed, the Arabs were definitely our superiors."—Gilbert Murray, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 191.

[2] Mr. G. P. Gooch has written that "the scientific study of history began a hundred years ago in the University of Berlin." (*Recent Developments in European Thought*, ed. F. S. Marvin, 1919, p. 140.) This statement should perhaps be taken *cum grano salis*—Croce would say that what began a hundred years ago in Berlin was only the historiography of modern positivism. But it seems nevertheless to date very well what I have referred to in the text as "the rise of modern historical research."

That this new understanding of the vast range of human religion has brought great gain to theological study and has in it the power to make a contribution of the first order of importance to the solution of the theological problem is now a matter of quite general agreement. The blindness of the traditional theology to all that was in any wise without the pale of the Hebrew-Christian tradition has received severe rebuke; and the deliberate justification of this blindness by Schleiermacher and the Ritschlians has been made to seem as wrong-headed as possible. The theology of the future must assuredly be one which can say of itself *'nil humanum a me alienum puto.'* At the same time it is of the utmost importance that we should not mislead ourselves as to the precise nature of the contribution that is here in question. We must therefore ask in what way a cognisance of the *racial diversity* of religion, or of those forms of it which are remote from the religious consciousness of his own communion, is likely to be of help to the theologian.

The question is one of far greater nicety than is commonly allowed for. We must take our stand, to begin with, upon our fundamental principle that it is only from within that the religious consciousness can be properly studied; and must insist that no religious experience (just as no moral or æsthetic experience) can be understood—or, as we say, "made head or tail of"—save by those who hold the key to it in their own experience and who to that extent share it. There is thus a very real sense in which the object of the theologian's inquiry is always his *own* religious consciousness or, what is the same thing, the religious consciousness of the community to which he belongs as reflected in his own private experience. His aim is to get at the heart of religion and to set in order for us its most essential utterances; but he may well feel that, in order to accomplish this aim, he need not—and indeed cannot—go beyond his own experience and that of the religious community in which he enjoys fellowship. Of course it is true that the fundamental significance of religion is not *equally* well exhibited in all forms of religious experience. Assuming, for instance, that Christianity represents a higher form of religion than Taoism, we should have to say that a scientific student of religion who was a Taoist would be likely, in his understanding of religion, to fall far short of the insight possible to the student who was a Christian; in much the same way (to take a parallel instance from æsthetics) as the understanding of the nature of music by such masters of *Geisteswissenschaft* as Plato and Aristotle was seriously limited by the deficiency of Greek music in their time—by the absence from it of all harmony in our sense of the term, by the prevailingly emotional nature of the uses to which it was put, and by its apparent failure ever to dissociate melody from particular sets of words. But from the same premise it would follow that the Christian student would never need to go beyond the pale of that Christian consciousness in which he himself was a sharer, in order to understand religion as it is at its very highest and best; and that by going further he could only fare worse. On the other hand it is truly the duty of all of us to keep an open mind with reference to religion. We must be prepared at any time to receive light from new and unexpected quarters, and not least perhaps from those streams of religious tradition which have up till now flowed in entire independence of the Hebrew-Christian development. Consequently the question might be raised whether the student of religion may not often do well to go beyond his own religious consciousness as a Christian in order to draw upon characteristic teachings of Veda, Upanishad, or Koran. The answer must be that he can do this as a scientific student only in so far as he has already done it as a religious subject. That is to say, it is only in so far as his own religious consciousness has been so broadened and advanced as to take up into itself the strange teaching, that he can find in it any light to help him in his task as a theologian.

What mainly needs understanding here is the nature of the relation in which the diversity of human religion in all the ages and all the lands stands to our twentieth-century Christian consciousness. Undoubtedly the greater part of it is not to be looked upon as something alien to Christianity, parallel to it and in competition with it, but rather as representing earlier stadia of development through which our own religion has long ago passed. To that extent, therefore, the diversity of the religious systems is contained *within* our Christian religious consciousness, as the experiences of childhood are contained within the consciousness of the grown man. We do not really need to go outside of ourselves in order to understand the religious experience of a Jew, of a Mussulman, or even of a Druid; nor yet in order to understand the experience of an Orphic worshipper, or of a Socrates or a Seneca or a Marcus Aurelius. Most of what was good and significant in these experiences has been taken up (we believe) into our Christian faith, and some of what has not been so taken up has been transformed into better; and now we are able to understand them only in so far as the historical remains of them can be interpreted to us by a present consciousness which is built upon their foundations. The case is no doubt otherwise with those religious systems which represent alternative lines of development to that in which we ourselves stand, such as the great religions of the Far East. But even such religions as these are far from being *wholly* alien to our spirits; on the contrary there is much in them which they share with our Western faith, and still more which represents stadia through which Western faith has already passed; and of what remains it is true, as we said, that it can have coherent meaning for us only in so far as our own religious experience gives us some means of approaching it from within, and either repudiating it as an aberration or finding in it some new light to which we had not previously attained.

We must conclude, then, that Schleiermacher and Ritschl and Herrmann were not wrong in insisting that the theologian must of necessity take up his standpoint within his own religious consciousness or (in so far as religion is a corporate affair) within the consciousness of the fellowship of which he recognises himself to be a member; nor yet in insisting that he cannot profitably, in his attempt to solve his problem, penetrate beyond the outside limits of that consciousness. Where they were wrong, and where the new interest in the variety of human religion enters in as a valuable corrective and supplement, was in the narrow view they took concerning the real extent and extensibility of the religious consciousness which we possess as followers of Jesus Christ in this modern time. They represented Christianity as one among many alternative brands of religious faith, and recommended the theologian to confine his attention to this one brand of it and to treat the others as mysteries beyond his ken. But that is not what Christianity claims to be. It claims to be the whole of religion and to include within itself all the real religion there is; not, of course, in the sense that there is no true faith in the world which does not own the name of Christ, but in the sense that what is of value in such faith will be found to be present in Christianity also, together with something else that can be found there alone. And we may well feel that Christianity is either this—the whole of true religion, or it is nothing to which we can give our own unqualified allegiance. But from this it follows that, though on the one hand the theologian must take up his standpoint within his Christian consciousness of God, yet on the other hand there is no genuinely religious manifestation of the spirit of man which is in principle outside his field.

The extent to which he will in practice find it profitable to go for his data beyond the limits of that stream of tradition which is reflected in the Old and New Testaments and in the history of the Christian Church is quite a different question, and one which cannot perhaps be settled in general terms. In this matter different students may well agree to differ. One may find many an illuminating sidelight and much richly illustrative material in the sacred books of India or of China or of Persia, or in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Whereas another may find all he needs, or nearly all, in the literature of the Christian Church; and may ask why, if all, or nearly all, that is good in religion has already been taken up into the Christian tradition, he should be obliged to go a-seeking any farther. It is for this reason, as we noted in the last chapter, that the actual theological formulations of Schleiermacher and the Ritschlians were vitiated so much less than might have been expected by the very artificial limitations which they placed upon the theologian's task. Yet though it may thus be possible to reach a very satisfactory solution of the central problem of theology without going beyond the limits of the acknowledged influence of Christ, it remains true that the whole task of theology cannot be held to have been satisfactorily completed until every really significant phase of the religious experience of man has been given its proper place and value in relation to the system of religious judgments as a whole.

Once again it may be of help to us, and may serve to bring together the many different points on which we have here found it necessary to insist, if we consider the customary procedure of such a sister science as ethics. As has already been said, no good reason can be given why the scientific theory of morals should not be strictly parallel in general method to the scientific theory of religion; conscience[1] and faith being as nearly parallel phenomena as any that could be found in our human experience, and the diversity of moral codes being a circumstance strictly parallel to the diversity of religious cults. Yet it is remarkable that if we take up a good text-book of ethics—the *Nicomachean Ethics* or *The Critique of Practical Reason* or Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*—we find no direct reference at all made to the endless diversity of moral codes that have been or still are current in the world; and especially we do not find reference made to any moral ideas or standards that are foreign to our occidental (*i. e.*, Hellenic, Hebraic, and Christian) tradition. It is indeed true that in many of the text-books published since the promulgation of the notion of evolution in the middle years of the last century we do find a section devoted to the topic of "moral progress";[2] but in the first place this is taken to mean the development that has occurred in the moral ideals and practice of *any one* people from earlier times until now; and in the second place the question is treated as being subsidiary to the main issue which it is the business of ethical science to face. The main business of ethics is of course to discover the real truth about the moral consciousness, but it has never been supposed by students of the subject that the secret of this truth could be surprised by setting side by side the moral ideas and practices of different peoples, different epochs, or different individuals of the same race and epoch, and looking at them (or comparing them with one another) from the outside. On the contrary, their procedure has always been to attempt the analysis of the moral consciousness of *any one* individual from the *inside*. Moreover the moralist has from the beginning been aware that the individual in question must always in a very real sense be *himself*, and that, in the last analysis, it is always *his own* moral consciousness which he is analysing; and more especially he has been aware that if he did not already possess in his own conscience a norm of moral judgment and appraisal he could not conceivably elicit one from the mere external contemplation of the moral development of the race—any more than a man devoid of all poetical discrimination of his own could elicit a standard of beauty in verse from the mere observation and comparison of other men's judgments and emotions in this field. It is moreover to be very carefully noted that, though it seldom or never made any reference beyond the boundaries of contemporary Western and Christian moral experience, yet the traditional ethics certainly did not look upon its conclusions as obtaining only within these boundaries. It knew little of any moral consciousness that was not Christian through and through, but it did not for that reason describe itself as 'Christian Ethics.' No, it was simply 'Ethics' without qualification, and its results were proclaimed as being as near to the universal truth about good and evil as the particular moralist in question was able to bring them.

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[1] Here, as generally throughout this work, I use the word conscience in the broadest sense of it as a convenient brief synonym for our whole human consciousness of the Good; and not in the narrow and almost derogatory sense to which it has been degraded by some contemporary ethical writers.

[2] See, *e. g.*, Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, book III, chs. II to V; Seth's *Ethical Principles*, part II, ch. III.

Now we may well feel that the ethical science of the past has been seriously the loser by its failure to take up into itself a broader historical background of experience. Undoubtedly it will be a great gain when students of the subject possess more knowledge and strive to make more extensive application of such facts as are (with what success we need not here inquire) attempted to be presented in works like Professor Westermarck's *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* and Professor Hobhouse's *Morals in Evolution.* To this extent we may claim that contemporary ethics (as also contemporary æsthetical science) has something to learn from the contemporary state of theological study. At the same time nobody with any understanding would dream of suggesting that the whole traditional procedure has been vitiated by this limitation of knowledge and interest, or that Aristotle and Bishop Butler and Kant were precluded from a proper understanding of 'the good for man' or of the nature of the moral imperative by their failure to take particular account of the moral standards of the Australian blacks, the red Indian tribes, and the high civilisations of the ancient East.

But there is no reason why theological science should be obliged to take any other kind or degree of cognisance of the variety of religious cults than ethical science must take of the variety of moral codes.

x Critique of "The Science of Religion".

III

There will be some readers to whom most of the points that we have been at such pains to make will seem very obvious, and by them we shall no doubt be accused of undue prolixity in our discussion of them. But there is a certain course of reading which might possibly do something to induce them to change their minds. The reference is to the numerous volumes which have emanated from the historical school of students, and which claim to represent the foundation, for the first time in history, of a real 'Science of Religion.'[1] "The Science of Religion," wrote, for instance, De la Saussaye in the year 1887, "is a new science which has assumed an independent existence during the last decades only."[2]

When we thus read of a new Science of Religion we are at once led to ask whether we have here to do with a separate kind of study which may be pursued in independence of the old theology and in addition to it, or whether the new science is rather to be taken as the *sole* legitimate science of religion and therefore as superseding the old theology (alike of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Schleiermacher) and taking up into itself whatever was of value in it. Unfortunately the answer to this question is not always clear; nor, when clear, is it always the same answer. We shall therefore be obliged to deal separately, first with the view which understands the Science of Religion to be all-embracing, and afterwards with the view which limits it to the mere compilation of historical material.

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[1] Among the most important books are the following: F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, 1873; Eugène Burnouf, *La science des religions*, 1876. (Eng. transl., *The Science of Religions*, 1888); C. P. Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, 1897–1899; Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 1887. (Eng. transl., *Manual of the Science of Religion*, 1891; first volume only); Jean Réville, *Prolégomènes de l'histoire des religions*, 1881; E. Lehmann, *Inledning till Religionsvetenkapen*, 1914; less important are the numerous other French books (by Rhétoré, Chabin, etc.) entitled *La science de la religion*, and the many German textbooks of *Religionswissenschaft* and *Religionsgeschichte* (by Von Orelli, Tischhauser, etc.).

[2] *Manual of the Science of Religion*, English translation; the opening sentence.

(*A*) It is the former of these views which, with however varying degrees of trenchancy, has been represented by most of the pioneers in the field. This already appears from the name by which they are accustomed to call their study; for though we, in order to save confusion, have here been speaking of it as 'The *Historical* Science of Religion,' writers like Max Müller, Burnouf, Tiele, Réville, and the rest did not think it necessary to add the qualifying adjective, but spoke (as their followers still commonly speak) simply of 'The Science of Religion'; though some of them have not hesitated to use the alternative title 'The History of Religion' as in every way a synonym. Let us then see what view this Science of Religion takes as to its own aims and procedure.

The science was at the beginning provided with its motto and device by Max Müller when he gave utterance to the now celebrated words, "*Wer eine Religion kennt, kennt keine*"—"He who knows but one religion knows none at all." The intention of this saying is clearly to claim that a proper theoretical interpretation of religion has for the first time been rendered possible by our modern historical knowledge of the religion of other peoples and epochs. Our common aim is admittedly to understand what religion is, to organise its manifold appearances and systematise its manifold utterances, and so to get at the heart of the thing itself. And it is now supposed that this can only be done by taking a broad view over the epochal development and the ethnological diversity of religion and placing all, or as many as possible, of the varying forms of it side by side, in the hope that there may thus be revealed to us the inner laws of religious development and religious value; and that, by using these laws wisely, we may succeed in arranging the various religious systems in an evolutionary and valuational series, and so be able to announce to the world both what religion is at all times and what it is in its highest form—and perhaps also to what final goal of thought and feeling it is destined to lead us in the future.

That this is a fair summary of the hopes on which the new science of religion has fed itself will not be denied by any who are familiar with its literature. It may be thought that we have stated its claims in their maximum form, and this we admit, yet it is only by thus bringing into the clear light of day claims which are sometimes only half-consciously or even surreptitiously made that we can hope to deal with them in a satisfactory manner. What then are we to say about them?

We cannot begin our criticism better than by reminding ourselves of the reply to Max Müller's dictum which the Ritschlian historian, Adolf Harnack, made in his rectorial address at Berlin in 1907. Speaking of religion as we know it within the Jewish-Christian tradition (and with sly reference to what the great philologist had said), he gave utterance to the now almost equally famous words, "*Wer diese Religion kennt, kennt alle*"—"He who knows *this* religion knows all religions." In saying this, Harnack had of course in mind the great richness and many-sidedness of Christian experience and tradition, and the difficulty which a historian would have in finding anywhere in the world a really significant variety of the religious consciousness which was not in some measure contained in the experience of the Christian soul or in the history of the Christian Church. And he was no doubt alive to the truth of the view which would find the typical structure of the religious consciousness present in *any* authentic example of it, and would at the same time find the whole truth of it nowhere else but in its best or Christian form. The reply was undoubtedly effective, and was exactly parallel to that which any of our moral philosophers would make to an anthropologist who told them that they could not possibly know what morality really was from a study merely of their own moral consciousness or that of their Christian and twentieth-century neighbours, but could know it only from a comparative inspection of the moral codes and practices of every age and clime.

What the moral philosopher would say, of course, would be that, far from the mere contemplation of the moral life of others being able to provide him with a standard of moral value which he did not already in his own consciousness possess, it is only by the sympathetic and imaginative transference of his own moral nature to these others that he is able to take the measure of their moral experience at all. It is no doubt true that some acquaintance with other moral experiences than one's own particular and private one is necessary in order to a fully self-conscious realisation of the structure even of one's own experience; but this is emphatically not true in any sense which would make such realisation consequent upon an inspection of the moral experience of others, as from without, and with one's own moral experience in abeyance; nor is the case to be understood as in any wise parallel to that of our purely exterior acquaintance with the structure of the natural world, with reference to which it is true (as the logic books say) that "the probability increases with the number and variety of the instances."

Now the trouble with this *soi-disant* Science of Religion has been precisely that it has tried to be a *natural* science of religion, and has essayed to treat the faiths of mankind as so much *dead matter*, to be understood not by introspective insight but by external inspection and comparison. But the truth is that, regarded from this point of view, the religious experience of mankind is the merest chaos of kaleidoscopic forms; and that only by regarding it from within, and through the glass of the experience itself, can either meaning or order be discovered in it. Where so many of the writers in question have erred has been in their refusal (or, as some of them would perhaps prefer to have us say, their inability) to make use of any standards of judgment given to them in their own religious experience when attempting to set in order the facts of religion as a whole; and in their vain hope that these facts, as thus externally regarded, would, if only one could collect enough of them, somehow fall into place and order of themselves and at the same time reveal the interior laws of their own nature and development. As if a man with no musical ear or taste of his own could set in order for us the development of music in the world from the chanting of the Homeric hymns or of the Song of Deborah to the operas of Wagner or the symphonies of Scriabin, telling us which influences in it were forward-moving and which reactionary! As if a man who did not appreciate stained glass could discourse intelligently of the progress of its manufacture and distinguish for us its rising and falling grades! As if a man could judge for us that this ethical code was 'higher' or 'lower' than that other without making appeal to his own moral judgment and intelligence!

The candour and ingenuousness with which we are sometimes recommended in the name of this Science of Religion to stand aside from the faith that lives in our own hearts when we are trying to understand the faith of mankind as a whole is indeed enough to make us rub our eyes and wonder whether we have read correctly. One well-known writer, for instance, speaks of the necessity of "exposing the fallacious attitude of those who make their own religious predilections the criterion of religious truth."[1] "Even the best-equipped scholar," he tells us, "must keep watch, lest on a subject touching personal predilections and personal convictions so closely he finds himself influenced in his investigations by his preferences and dislikes."[2] Of course, if one's religious judgments were expressions of purely individual 'preference' or 'predilection' or 'dislike,' recognised as such, like one's preference of Virginia to Turkish tobacco, there would be something in this advice. We must be careful, certainly, not to conclude that one kind of tobacco is 'better' than another in any objective sense, merely because we happen to prefer it. But religious judgments being what they are, and making claim to objective truth as they undoubtedly do, it is psychologically an impossible feat, as well as logically a self-contradictory desire, *not* to make one's own fundamental religious convictions the criterion of religious truth. If we believe them to be true (as we must do, if they are really convictions), then we are, *ipso facto*, making them the criterion. And, once again, what *other* criterion is at all conceivable? Moreover, if one does not set aside one's conscience in seeking for moral truth, or one's æsthetic judgment in seeking to surprise the secret of beauty, why then should one have to lay aside one's faith in seeking for "religious truth"? Another example of this strange misunderstanding may be quoted from Tiele. "Were I," he says in one place, "to express my full religious conviction I should confess that true religion, the religion of humanity, has been revealed in Christ. . . . But this is a matter of faith, and I must here maintain my purely scientific and impartial position."[3] Here we seem to have 'science' masquerading in a new guise as compelling us not to make any use in our inquiry of a truth of which we are nevertheless "convinced," and which is of such a kind as to bring us to the core of the very issue that is being inquired into! We are analysing human faith, yet we must not bring the light of our own faith to bear upon the analysis! As a matter of fact, if there is one point rather than another concerning which we should expect the "Elements of the Science of Religion" to enlighten us, it is just the real inward nature of the very kind of "conviction" and "faith" which Tiele claims to possess himself in regard to the truth of Christianity.

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[1] Morris Jastrow, *The Study of Religion*, p. 127.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 320.

[3] *Elements of the Science of Religion*, vol. I, pp. 211–212.

In view of such statements as these it is perhaps not surprising that so much of the work that has been done under the ægis of the Science of Religion should, in spite of its undoubted possession of many kinds of excellence, nevertheless seem to be pervaded with a subtle religious scepticism. We have so often had from it the impression that religion is a dead thing, or a thing of the past, or a thing meant for people constituted differently from our very modern and reasonable selves. It is indeed true that the students of this science are nearly always far better than their word and do, in spite of all their protestations, bring their own religious intelligence and the light of their own religious experience to bear upon the otherwise chaotic mass of fact which it is their business to set in order; and when they tell us that this or that change in men's beliefs marks an advance and not a retrogression, they do, in spite of all bluff, mean only that it marks a step nearer to what they themselves believe, or at least that in it they recognise the operation of a principle which they themselves feel to be sound and good. Yet it is remarkable how seldom in such writings we are able completely to escape the impression that we are here having religion described to us by one who either lacks a religious experience of his own or has left that side of his spiritual equipment behind him at home when he came to this workshop. And sometimes, as in M. Reinach's *Orpheus: a General History of Religions*,[1] we do seem to approach very near to the strangely perverse ideal of 'explaining' a thing without drawing at all upon one's own inside acquaintance with its living and still active essence.

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[1] Of this book the Abbé Loisy, in his little collection of essays *A propos d'histoire des religions*, has well said: "Ce qu'on ne peut s'empêcher de constater avec regret, c'est une espèce d'impuissance à voir dans les religions autre chose que cette chaîne d'erreurs; c'est l'absence totale du sentiment de la vie qu'ont eu et qu'ont encore les religions dont M. Reinach ne décrit que les formes extérieures; c'est l'impression de néant que laisse un livre qui se flatte d'expliquer le phénomène humain de la religion; c'est l'ardeur polémique incontestable, vraiment passionée, qui fait qu'on se demande presque, en finissant, si l'auteur n'a considéré le christianisme comme une sorte de colossal antisémitisme."

(*B*) We must, however, now turn our attention to another view which is very often taken of the matter. It is represented by many that the new scientific investigation into the diversity of religious systems does not in any sense take the place of the old theology or philosophy of religion, but is an entirely separate inquiry with a distinct and strictly limited field of its own. Its standpoint is, in fact, 'purely historical,' aiming only at a complete amassment of the facts; while the standpoint of theology is 'normative,' having to do with validity and truth. Those who take this view do not find it natural to speak of the new study as the Science of Religion, but prefer rather to think of it as the History of Religion. And between this *Religionsgeschichte* and theology as *Religionsphilosophie* they make a clean-cut division. The historical inquiry, they insist, can have nothing to say as to higher or lower, good or bad, true or false; but must leave the settlement of all such issues to the philosophical inquiry, about whose sole right to them they are commonly very jealous, crying to the other *Ne sutor ultra crepidam!*

This view of the matter is one which is very widely adopted by popular expounders of things theological and by the writers both of primers and of encyclopædias, but it is one for which very little support can be found among the founders of the new study themselves. Nothing was indeed further from the intention of those who proudly arrogated to their inquiry the name of the Science of Religion than to content themselves with the mere collection of data and to leave all questions of relative value to be settled by other and purely 'philosophical' methods. On the contrary, their great hope was that the new study might throw an entirely fresh light on the laws actually operative within the religious consciousness and guiding its historical integration and development, and so put in our hands a new and powerful instrument of valuation.

What then are we to say of this other view? The answer is that in making a methodological distinction between history and philosophy it is fundamentally sound and has performed an important service in setting a curb upon the exaggerated pretensions of the new discipline, but that it is wrong both in endeavouring to make the distinction an absolute one and also in its interpretation of the distinction as being between fact on the one hand and value on the other. By allowing themselves to fall into these errors the supporters of this view were playing far too easily into the hands of those in the opposite camp. For the writers of the new school were quite right in feeling that if the historian be thus altogether precluded from adopting a normative attitude towards his data and from raising any question as to their relative significance and validity, his task is no longer worthy of the name of science at all; he ceases to be an interpreter and degenerates into a mere chronicler, a collector of dead facts, concerned only to reproduce in the medium of written words, and without any kind of discriminating judgment, a sort of copy of the actual course of terrestrial happenings or, in Ranke's celebrated phrase, of *was eigentlich geschehen, wie es eigentlich gewesen.*

Perhaps the most obvious objection to this view of history is that it seems to make the historian's task one of quite impossible magnitude. For there is no limit whatever to the number of 'facts' that could be recorded. All concrete facts being infinitely divisible, the total number of facts is quite strictly infinite. Indeed there is no limit even to the facts that could be recorded about a single epoch, a single chapter of events, a single historical phenomenon. To take some random examples from our own sphere, if one attempted to record all that there *is* to record about the effect of the World War on current religious belief, or about the rise of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, or about the rise of Christianity in the ancient Mediterranean world—"if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." The mistake of not recognising this obvious truth was indeed the very first mistake that modern science—or perhaps we should rather say the *theory* of modern science—made. It was the mistake of Francis Bacon, that *buccinator novi temporis* who recommended science to set out by making an exhaustive "catalogue of particular facts," and who seems to have believed that such a catalogue could be made within a limited time and in the most mechanical way. History, he urges, is merely a matter of memory, requiring no real exercise of reason—that would turn it into philosophy; it is therefore the easiest of all kinds of investigation. We need not labour the point that scientific method has now long repented itself of this error of its infancy and has completely departed from the original Baconian programme. It is now recognised that 'experienced fact' is a pure chaos apart from the presence of some selective interest. And of remembered fact the same thing is true.[1]

Even, however, if an exhaustive transcript of facts were possible, the value of it would still remain open to the most serious doubt. One feels that, at most, it would mean additional raw material for the historian to work upon rather than anything that could be called additional historical knowledge. If historiography consisted only in a record of raw facts, then the history of our own time, of current movements and contemporary phenomena, should be very easy indeed to write; whereas in reality it is notoriously difficult. In truth it is only so far as history is selective, so far as it is critical, so far as it stands for discrimination and interpretation, that it is worth reading or that anybody reads it. Who, for example, would read a history of literature that was entirely uncritical? And why then should we be asked to read a history of religion that is uncritical? Of course no such history has, as a matter of fact, ever been written or could be written. It is only on the surface that a book like M. Reinach's appears to be disinterested; in reality, few more prejudiced accounts of the development of the religious consciousness have been written in modern times; and the Abbé Loisy is right in speaking of the *ardeur polémique incontestable, vraiment passionée* of the book. But indeed it is always so. *Voraussetzungslose Wissenschaft* has usually meant only a science that has been blind to its presuppositions, not a science that has had none. What is important is not that historiography should be disinterested—which would mean precisely that it would be uninteresting; but that it should be inspired by some really significant and worthy human interest. The historian's aim should not be to have no presuppositions, but rather to have the right ones.

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[1] *Cf. Advancement of Learning*, book II; *Novum Organum*, book I, 100–122. Bacon's view of the relation of history to philosophy is succinctly expressed in the following passage from the former work: "The parts of human learning have reference to the three parts of Man's Understanding: History to his Memory, Poetry to his Imagination, and Philosophy to his Reason." Contrast with this Benedetto Croce's statement that "history is principally an act of thought." (*Theory and History of Historiography*, part I, ch. I, § 2.) But Samuel Johnson would agree with Bacon. "Great abilities (said he) are not requisite for an Historian; for in historical composition all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary."—Boswell, Oxford ed., vol. I, p. 284.

The historian of religion, then, if his work is to be either possible or useful, must be allowed a critical view-point and an unhindered judgment as to the relative value of different facts. But where then, it will be asked, does the distinction between historiography and philosophy come in at all? There are some who would answer that it does not come in anywhere, the two being in the last analysis one and the same thing. A recent distinguished exponent of this view is Benedetto Croce, who has written a book to show that "the division between the two has but a literary and didactic value,"[1] and that "when chronicle has been reduced to its proper practical and mnemonic function, and history has been raised to the knowledge of the eternal present, it reveals itself as one with philosophy."[2]

This is no doubt an extreme view of the case, or at least it is stated with a somewhat unnecessary appearance of paradox. What is true is simply that the division between history as the study of *vérités de fait* and philosophy as the study of *vérités de raison* is not an absolute but a relative one. That is to say, the difference between the two is not so much one of kind as of degree—the degree of the ultimacy of the questions that are raised; and not so much one of point of view as of field covered. What Croce is always emphasising is that historiography can remain relatively disinterested and unphilosophical only in proportion as it strictly confines its inquiry to a particular region of experience limited by chronological, geographical, ethnological, or some other boundaries; but that, in proportion as history approaches universal history, it becomes increasingly difficult and finally impossible to keep it separate from the philosophical inquiry.[1] And this we must allow to be true.

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[1] *The Theory and History of Historiography* (Eng. transl., 1921. The American edition, to the pagination of which my references apply, bears the inaccurate title, *History, Its Theory and Practice*), p. 151.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61. Croce goes on: "This, be it well understood, provided always that the dualism of ideas and facts has been superseded, of *vérités de raison* and *vérités de fait*, the concept of philosophy as contemplation of *vérités de raison*, and that of history as the amassing of brute facts, of coarse *vérités de fait*. We have recently found this tenacious dualism in the act of renewing itself, disguised beneath the axiom that *le propre de l'histoire est de savoir, le propre de la philosophie est de comprendre.* This amounts to the absurd distinction of knowing without understanding and of understanding without knowing." Croce's book is worthy of study on this whole matter. Interesting also is Ernest Barker's exposition and defence of Croce's view in *History: The Quarterly Journal of the Historical Association*, July, 1922—together with A. F. Pollard's very unsympathetic but occasionally effective reply. From Barker's article we may quote the following sentences: "Yes, we desire to know; but we have to avoid the *progressus ad infinitum.* There is no end of the things that were; and there is no end of the stories that might be told about them. But are such stories history? And is it not wise to have some definite conception of history—what it is and what purpose it serves? The danger before historians is that they should become story-tellers of the infinite." "All things are defined—and limited by the function they discharge and the potentiality they possess. It may be wise for the historian to acknowledge that his function is to aid each age to the attainment of self-consciousness, and that his potentiality rests in his ability to describe all the roots and the inspirations of the past which go to constitute the living present. He may be well advised to become the ally of the philosopher; and in the issue he may be rewarded—and astonished—by finding that he has become a philosopher himself. . . . I wish I knew more facts; I wish I had discovered *any* fact; but I wish most of all that I might understand better the facts which I know—and yet do not know, because I do not understand them thoroughly." Consult further the symposium *Are History and Science Different Kinds of Knowledge?* in *Mind*, N. S. XXXI (Oct., 1922)

Where then does this bring us out with reference to the mutual relations of *Religionsgeschichte* and *Religionsphilosophie*—the history of religion and our science of theology? The answer is that where the two inquiries differ is not so much in their point of view, nor yet in the kind of knowledge they aim at, but rather in their scope. It is the duty alike of theology and of the history of religion to organise the religious experience of men and to tell us the truth about its real and inward nature. But whereas the theologian must always keep this object before him in its entirety and strive to inform us of the truth of religious experience as such, as a whole, and without qualification, it is the duty of the historian to select, as occasion requires, this or that part of the religious experience of the race and make it the object of special study in abstraction from the other parts. The part in question may be marked off in various ways—chronologically, geographically, ethnographically, or by means of some line of demarcation interior to the religious consciousness itself. It may be a vertical section—such as the religion of primitive man or the religion of the New Testament Community; or it may be a horizontal stratum—such as the progress of Christian dogma or the development of the belief in a future life from Palæolithic man to ourselves. But in either case the distinguishing mark of the historical treatment of experience is the way in which from the living whole of experience it abstracts one strand or cross-section and attempts to find out for us the truth about that alone. It is for this reason that historiography appears as having primarily to do with fact, with *vérités de fait,* and science or philosophy with value, with *vérités de raison.* A fact is a broken-off fragment of experience considered in abstraction from the whole of experience; and as soon as it is brought back into relation with that whole it is always given something of a value and *raison d'être;* so that the distinction between *vérités de fait* and *vérités de raison* is also involved in the opposition of part and whole. Not even of the history of the temporal development of human religion "from the earliest times to the present day" is it true that its subject-matter is religious experience as a whole, because it has in mind only the chronological seriation of experience, which is but one aspect of its general significance. And it is, of course, a mistake to suppose that historiography is necessarily and exclusively connected with the chronological seriation of events; for that is only *one* of the several abstractions that it may make. For one thing, it is no less often concerned with the logical order of experience than with the chronological, no less concerned with the logic of development than with its chronology. For another thing, it often sets itself limits of another kind, as when the historian discourses of "The Buddhist Religion" or "The Religions of India." If a learned man were to give us an accurate delineation of the Buddhist faith he might make no reference at all to what in the narrow sense we call its 'history,' but only inform us as to the essential teaching for which it stands; yet we should think of him as doing for us the work of the historian rather than of the philosopher. Which is to say that philosophy may convert itself into history, not only by confining its attention to the chronological seriation of experience, but also by confining it to a certain geographically or ethnographically limited expression of it. As a matter of fact, most of the existent "handbooks of the history of religion" (as those of De la Saussaye, A. Menzies, Tiele-Söderblom, G. F. Moore) do not at all follow the chronological order of events, but are much rather concerned with the *ethnographical diversity* of religion. And where they fall short of fulfilling the function of theological science proper is that they deal with our human religious experience not as an organic whole but as a series of mutually exclusive fragments called 'Hinduism,' 'Buddhism,' 'Taoism,' 'Sikhism,' and so forth. And most of them are so far from being anything that could properly be called 'universal history' of religion (and so be indistinguishable from theology) that they are hardly more than a series of separate and largely unrelated essays on the religious systems of the various races—bound together in one volume for convenience's sake.

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[1] *Cf.* R. G. Collingwood's able book, *Speculum Mentis, or the Map of Knowledge* (1924), in which three successive (though not immediately successive) chapters bear the significant titles: "History as the Assertion of Fact," "The Break-down of History," and "The Transition from History to Philosophy."

We may therefore sum up by saying that the historiography of religion cannot correctly be regarded as a study entirely separate from the theological inquiry proper, or as working in entire independence of it.[1] On the contrary, it must always work in its service and is, in fact, from one point of view nothing else than theology itself delimiting its attention to one particular section or strand of the whole experience which it is its business to study. It is the duty of theological science to provide the historical study of religion with a proper point of view, proper presuppositions, and a succession of proper questions. Equipped with these instruments, historical inquiry goes to work in temporary forgetfulness of the larger issues in whose service it is being employed. But to these larger issues it must finally return, handing over its results to the wider inquiry of theology, which now proceeds to make its own use of them. Thus do theology and the historiography of religion work hand in hand. They grow together and each learns from the other. It is from a sound theological outlook that the historiography of religion must take its cue, but when, having done so, and having completed its work, it brings home its finished results, then it is theology's turn to make what use of them it can.

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[1] In his paper on "Origin and Validity in Religion" in his *Psychology and Folklore*, Mr. Marett takes the view that history, science, philosophy and religion—*i. e.*, history of religion, the science of religion, theology (or philosophy of religion), and religion itself—constitute, in that order, an ascending scale. "History states a 'that,' describing the actual seriation of events. Science goes on to exhibit the 'how' of the process, by discovering within it a law of normal sequence or tendency. So far the interest is in fact, but henceforth it relates to value. Philosophy seeks to supplement the 'how' of science with a 'why.' . . . Finally religion, being not merely teleological but teleopractical, . . . solves the contradiction . . . by an act of faith . . . ." (P. 143.) "Fact in detail, fact generalised, fact intellectually valued, fact vitally valued . . . such is the ascending scale." (P. 155.) My difficulty with this formulation would be that I do not see how the four disciplines can really be kept so neatly apart. Can the historian be, as Mr. Marett admits this formulation makes him, "a mere annalist, a recorder of passing events"? (P. 155.) Can we be interested in facts apart from their value? Can 'science' and 'philosophy,' the question 'how' and the question 'why,' be kept so distinctly apart?

a Critique of " The ~~Phs~~ Psychology of Religion

IV

We pass now from the "Historical Science of Religion" to the so-called "Psychology of Religion." The devotees of this science claim that it dates from about 1890, having first come into being with the investigations in America of William James, Stanley Hall, and Professors Leuba, Starbuck, and Coe.[1]

It is quite certain that the investigations in question have been carried on very largely along novel lines, and it is also certain that they have led to conclusions that are of no inconsiderable value; but whether they can be regarded as marking the foundation of anything that can be called a new science is by no means so certain.

In trying to answer this latter question we are moreover faced by the very same situation which faced us in dealing with the Historical Science of Religion. All that the leaders of the movement are clear about is that they have discovered a new point of view and method of inquiry in the study of religion, and that these are to be distinguished from those of the older theology as being 'psychological.' But when we ask whether the new study is to supersede the old and take it up into itself, or merely to take its place amicably beside it as a separate investigation with a strictly limited sphere of its own, once again we can find no agreement. And once again we can do no better than consider *first* the justice of the claim that the new method marks an advance on the older one, and *second* the justice of the alternative claim that it marks rather the foundation of a separate and independent branch of study.

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[1] (*a*) "The psychology of religion, if it may be dated from the first books published under this title, appeared as a distinct subject of investigation only ten years ago, with the pioneer volumes of Starbuck and Coe."—E. S. Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience* (1910), p. 3.

(*b*) "The closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth mark the beginning of a definite determination to use the resources of scientific psychology in the investigation of religion."—G. A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 1.

(*c*) "Writers on the Philosophy of Religion, from the time of Augustine and even of St. Paul, have dealt with certain psychological factors of religion, but the application of modern critical and empirical methods to the study of religion hardly antedates the last decade of the nineteenth century."—J. B. Pratt in *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics* (ed. Mathews and Smith), *in loc.*

(*A*) It is the former view that can claim the greater number of names for itself among the most influential founders and leaders of the movement itself, the majority of whom undoubtedly refuse to stop short of valuational discrimination. One writes:

> "It would seem to be impossible to leave meaning and value out of account in treating of religion, for no function can be intelligibly discussed out of connection with the end to which it is adjusted. . . . On logical grounds, at any rate, it seems necessary to assume that every phase of the religious experience is legitimate material for the psychologist."[1]

Another writes:

> "We must go forward to a psychology of values, functions, self-realisations."[2]

While a third more fully says:

> "The psychology of religious experience becomes the conditioning science for the various branches of theology, or, rather, it is the science which in its developed forms becomes theology or the philosophy of religion. If reality is given in experience (and where else could it be given?), then the science of that experience furnishes the reasonable and fruitful method of dealing with reality, including the reality of religion. The psychology of religion possesses, therefore, the greatest possible significance. It does not merely prepare the way for theology, but in its most elementary inquiries it is already dealing with essentials of theology and the philosophy of religion. On the other hand, the philosophy of religion in its most ultimate problems and refined developments does not transcend the principles of psychology. The idea of God, for example, which is the central conception of theology, is subject to the same laws of the mental life as are all other ideas, and there is but one science of psychology applicable to it."[3]

A similar view is in the end represented by William James, who indeed begins his great book by saying that he is going to deal with religion only from an "existential" point of view and to leave all question of value to philosophy, but who at a later stage recommends philosophy to transform herself into his own psychological science of religion, and who concludes with a *sortie* of the most definite kind into the region of ultimate truth.

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[1] Irving King, *The Development of Religion*, pp. 15, 18.

[2] George A. Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 13.

[3] Edward Scribner Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, pp. 26–27.

In what respect, then, does the Psychology of Religion claim to perform this common task more adequately than it had previously been performed by theology? The broad and general answer would be that the old study attempted to draw its conclusions deductively from premises outside the religious consciousness, whereas the new study seeks to draw them inductively and empirically from that consciousness itself. In other words, where the older method tried to provide for faith a new and independent basis or else to show that no such basis was available, the newer method is content to bring to light the basis of assurance which faith already interiorly possesses. Here is one of the passages from William James:

> "In all sad sincerity I think we must conclude that the attempt to demonstrate by purely intellectual processes the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience is absolutely hopeless.
>
> "It would be unfair to philosophy, however, to leave her under this negative sentence. Let me close, then, by briefly enumerating what she *can* do for religion. If she will abandon metaphysics and deduction for criticism and induction, and frankly transform herself from theology into science of religions, she can make herself enormously useful."[1]

With the change which it is here proposed to introduce into the traditional theological procedure we have already expressed ourselves as being in the most eager sympathy. We have shown how it is precisely owing to this defect in the older theology that the "Psychology of Religion" came into being; and in common with almost all serious students of the subject we believe that the new study is every day doing more to remedy this defect. We do, however, feel obliged to add the qualifying reminder that this much-needed change in method was first effectively introduced into theology not in 1890 by James and his contemporaries but a hundred years earlier by Kant and Schleiermacher. And it is just this reminder that most of our new psychologists would not accept. They would claim that writers like Schleiermacher and the Ritschlians, though indeed they were endeavouring to bring out the native witness of faith to its own truth rather than to discover an outside proof of it, were yet looking at religion through the eyes of their own traditionally supplied Christian conviction, and were not, as the Psychology of Religion recommends, endeavouring to draw impartial conclusions from all the available data in the spirit of inductive science.

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[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 455. James is one of those who in the end see that "psychology of religion" and "science of religions" cannot ultimately be distinguished from one another.

It is just here, then, that the real issue lies. What has above all characterised the Psychology of Religion has been its desire to look at its facts from the outside after the manner of the natural sciences. "Psychology," says James, "is a natural science," and "to the psychologist the minds he studies are objects in a world of other objects."[1] The champions of the new method have accordingly endeavoured, at the beginning of their inquiry, to set themselves outside their own spiritual convictions and *Werturteile* and, laying aside this standard of good judgment which they already in themselves possess as religious subjects, to look upon all the phenomena of the religious life simply as so many existent facts, and consequently as being all of equal rank as initial data. The result is well known. Where the older theology had confined its attention to those religious ideas, utterances, and manifestations which had seemed to it, when tested by the standard of value interior to the theologian's own religious consciousness, to be sane and true and fine, the new method of theologising has by contrast almost seemed to *harp* upon instances marked by sentimentality, artificiality, abnormality, hysteria, and even religious melancholia. Where once we had read only of the saint, the prophet, and the wise man, we now read of the psychopath, the ecstatic, the ultrasuggestible, and the sentimentalist visionary. And the selection is made quite deliberately. "The sentimentality of many of my documents," says James, "is a consequence of the fact that I have sought them among the extravagances of the subject";[2] and if we ask why this should have been, the answer is: "First, I say, irrepressible curiosity leads one on; and I say, secondly, that it always leads to a better understanding of a thing's significance to consider its exaggerations and perversions."[3] But whatever truth there may be in this latter dictum, it has been widely felt that this preferential attention to the extravagances of his subject has served James very badly in leading him to attribute to religion in general characteristics which do not really attach to it in its more normal and healthy forms—such characteristics, for example, as the predominance of the affectional over the intellectual element and the close association with the subconscious self. The truth is that the extravagances of *any* subject of human interest are likely to reveal such a welter of sentimentality and such a hypnotisation of the intellect as James has found to exist in the extravagances of religion. It is accordingly not of the religious man as such but of the psychopath as such (whether saint or lover, patriot or æsthete) that the primacy of emotion and the dominance of subconscious forces are characteristic marks. Religion at its best has always known that

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[1] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. I, p. 183. [2] *Varieties*, p. 486. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

> ". . . . . The gods approve
> The depth and not the tumult of the soul."

Yet although the Psychology of Religion has thus been anxious to set out from what James calls a purely existential view of its facts, the majority of its representatives have, as has already been said, believed it possible to advance from this existential to a valuational view. That is to say, they have hoped that if, setting aside their own sense of religious discrimination, they regarded the religious ideas, feelings, and actions of men at large merely as so many hard and raw facts, they would gain from the inspection of them a discriminative standard of a new and more impartial kind, which should accordingly enlighten them concerning the true values of religion.

The most determined attempt to carry such a process through is that made by William James himself in the concluding lecture of his *Varieties of Religious Experience.* In this lecture he proposes for solution two final questions about religion—"*first,* is there, under all the discrepancies of the creeds, a common nucleus to which they bear their testimony unanimously, and, *second,* ought we to consider the testimony true?" The first question he feels himself able to answer in the affirmative, finding the common element in all religion to be twofold—first, "an uneasiness" which, "reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is something wrong about us as we actually stand," and, second, "the solution of this uneasiness" in "a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers."[1] On another page this common nucleus is somewhat more precisely defined as consisting in the following three convictions:

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[1] *Varieties*, pp. 507–508.

> "(1) That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance;
>
> "(2) That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end;
>
> "(3) That prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof . . . is a process wherein work is really done."[1]

The next point is as to how James faces the further and admittedly separate question of the "objective truth of the content" of these beliefs. He begins by offering a somewhat closer analysis of the way in which we make connection with the supposed higher powers. "Along with the wrong part" of the individual there is always a germinal "better part," and the solution of the wrongness just means that the individual identifies himself with this better part. "He does so in the following way. He becomes conscious that this higher part is coterminous and continuous with a *More* of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck." Now the crucial question is whether we merely imagine the presence of this *More*, or whether it really exists. It is in answering this question, says James, that "the various theologies perform their theoretic work," but the Psychology of Religion can answer it also, less dogmatically, more impartially. "Let me then," James goes on in words that are now well known, "propose as an hypothesis that whatever it may be on its *farther* side, the 'more' with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its *hither* side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life." Hence "we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come a positive content of religious experience which . . . is literally and objectively true as far as it goes." That this wider self, this 'more,' is on its farther side a trans-subjective Divine reality James claims to believe; but he characterises this as his own particular "overbelief," cherished by him in spite of the fact that his science is impotent to establish it.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 485.

[2] *Op. Ibid.*, pp. 508–517.

The disappointingly meagre nature of this result needs no insisting on. It is indeed a case of much cry and little wool. The promise of psychology ends in this—that man really is, and does not merely imagine himself to be, in spiritual touch with something outside his conscious self, but that this something cannot be demonstrated (though it may be "believed") to be more than our own subconsciousness. What does call for remark, however, is the strong suggestion of subjectivist scepticism which all this leaves upon our minds. James himself is, indeed, no sceptic, because he holds to his overbelief; but somehow the very fact that he utterly foregoes any attempt to analyse the nature of such overbelief, or to assign its source and ground, creates in us a natural suspicion of its legitimacy. The truth is that *not until it has tackled this cardinal problem—the analysis of the real and inward nature of what James calls overbelief and most men call faith—has psychological science begun its real and deeply significant task with reference to religious experience;* and accordingly we cannot help feeling that it is to this question that James, as representing a true Psychology of Religion, should have devoted the main part of his volume. Whereas, in fact, it is only in appearance that James' psychology faces the question of the truth of religion; in reality he balks dead as soon as the question is raised, and puts us off with a bald, unargued, and quite unanalysed statement of his own faith.

If we now ask why James has failed in his endeavour, there is only one answer that can be given. He fails because he has attempted the impossible. He has tried to understand religion from the outside. He has tried to find some standard by which it can be judged other than that by which it judges itself. He has tried to make the truth of it demonstrable to the mere *observer*, to the third-personal *onlooker*. And none of these things, we are convinced, can possibly be done. Moreover the attempt to argue from the fact of men's assurance of God to the fact of God's existence must always appear as a logical absurdity; for to those who *are* sure of Him this argument is unnecessary and indeed tautological, while to those who are not sure of Him it can never be convincing.[1]

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[1] In *The Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 214, are quoted the following replies given by him to a questionnaire: "Do you feel that you have experienced His [God's] presence?" . . . "Never." "If you have had no such experience, do you accept

(*B*) We must now turn to the other possible view of the matter—to the view which would give to the Psychology of Religion a field quite distinct from that of theology, confining its task rigidly to the provision of initial data, and leaving all questions of relative worth, as well as of final truth, to be dealt with by the very different methods of the superior science. Although this view is represented only by a minority of the foremost practitioners of the new study, yet it has very widely recommended itself to those whose interest in the matter is of a more general kind and has found its way into most of the elementary textbooks and encyclopædia articles. Professor Pratt, for instance, writes that "with the ultimate problems of theology the psychology of religion does not concern itself,"[1] or more fully:

> "The psychology of religion must take a much humbler position than that which some of its devotees desire for it. It must content itself with a description of human experience, while recognising that there may well be spheres of reality to which these experiences refer and with which they are possibly connected, which yet cannot be investigated by science."[2]

Another writer says:

> "One fault in some psychological literature . . . is the introduction of judgments of worth into what are apparently intended to be descriptive accounts of facts."[3]

And still another, from whom we shall quote more fully:

> "The task of psychology is to observe, classify, and formulate conscious processes. To go beyond that is to pass outside the limits of psychology into the spheres of non-psychological science and philosophy. Psychology is concerned solely with what goes on *within* the conscious process. On this purely scientific view it is inevitable that the mind should be treated on mechanistic lines. . . . It will exclude from its purview all causes which lie outside the conscious process, and will invite us, at least pro-

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the testimony of others who claim to have felt God's presence directly?" . . . "Yes! The whole line of testimony on this point is so strong that I am unable to pooh-pooh it away. No doubt there is a germ in me of something similar that makes response."

There is an excellent and detailed criticism of James' *Varieties* in Emile Boutroux's *Science et religion*. The chapter on "The Psychological Explanation of Religious Phenomena" is also worthy of study in connection with our whole topic.

[1] In the dictionary article quoted above.

[2] *The Religious Consciousness*, ch. II.

[3] W. K. Wright, "The Relation of the Psychology of Religion to the Philosophy of Religion."—*Philosophical Review*, vol. XXVII, pp. 134 ff.

visionally, to regard mental phenomena as finding their complete explanation within the mental series.

"As applied to the special case of the psychology of religion, this principle involves the assumption that the psychology of religion is concerned with religious phenomena only in so far as they are factors within the conscious process, and find their explanation therein. Hence while religion itself is concerned with a spiritual world that transcends the individual, the psychology of religion must restrict itself to what goes on in the mind of the individual. It is its function to examine, classify, and formulate the mental processes involved in religious experience. It is no part of its business to refer this experience to any external cause. This is rather the function of philosophy and theology."[1]

This view of the matter is one which has performed useful service in preventing the subjectivist and externalist view-points of the new study from being taken too seriously, but it is hard to see in it a final solution of the question at issue. We shall set out our difficulties in detail.

In the *first* place, it is as true of the Psychology of Religion as we found it to be of the Historical Science of Religion that to conceive of its task as a purely impartial setting out of all the facts of the religious experience of man is to condemn it to the labours of the Danaides. The facts, regarded simply as facts, are infinite; and man cannot catalogue the infinite. Consequently any attempt to make description independent of and prior to all valuation must of necessity defeat itself. A selection must always be made, and every selection must be guided by some valuational hypothesis. And the *best* selection is just the selection that is guided by the best hypothesis, that is, by the soundest initial feeling as to the meaning and value of the facts. Description and valuation, therefore, instead of being made successive and assigned to different branches of study, must always work hand in hand with one another. Our judgments of value must be our guides in our investigation of fact, and our investigation of fact must, in its turn, progressively correct and instruct our judgments of value.

The most elaborate justification of this attempt to keep the Psychology of Religion entirely apart from the normative or epistemological inquiry is that offered by the distinguished German scholar Ernst Troeltsch. Himself essentially a theologian,

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[1] Professor E. J. Price, "The Limitations of the Psychology of Religion," in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XXII (1923–1924), pp. 664–665.

Troeltsch seemed confidently to believe that the study of religion could begin with a mere amassment of the phenomena of religious experience without any regard to their value. This amassment is the Psychology of Religion, and only when it has finished its work can the epistemological inquiry begin;[1] and the aim of this latter inquiry is the discovery of a principle (a "religious *a priori*") by which the validity or truth-value of the various assembled experiences can be measured.[2] But however excellent this may at first sound in the abstract, it is sheerly impossible in practice, so that all attempts to realise it must quickly end in shipwreck. Troeltsch himself speaks explicitly of the "*ungeheuere Ausdehnung und Mannigfaltigkeit*" of the raw facts of experience, but does not at all indicate to us how, without some selective principle to help us, we are ever to harness this infinity. In his view, no less than in Lord Bacon's, we are to begin with "pure empiricism" and (when that has completed its work) go on to "rationalism." Surely, however, empiricism and rationalism, instead of thus being successive stages in the scientific inquiry, are but false and oppositely one-sided views that have been taken as to how the scientific inquiry proceeds. And surely it is just as hopeless a thing to set out on a purely empirical inquiry without having any rational principle to guide us as it is to set out on an abstractly rational inquiry without having any empirical data as material on which to work.[3]

Secondly, we must remark on the inherent *uselessness* of such an uncritical catalogue of the religious feelings, ideas, beliefs, and actions of mankind at large, even if it could be compiled, and quite apart from the unmanageable size of it. There is indeed a sense in which we know too much about these things already. We all, in common life, have something like a surfeit of acquaintance with the *varieties* of religious experience, with the *diversities* of religious belief, with its irresponsible vagaries, its unbalanced one-sided expressions, its abnormalities and morbidities; and what we want from a science of religion is a more thorough and consistent guidance through this labyrinth than our ordinary judgment is able to give us. It is, indeed, highly doubtful whether, with reference to a region of experience like the religious, which is itself concerned with value, and in which every fact is a judgment claiming to be discriminative and to be true, it is legitimate for science to adopt a purely "existential" point of view at all. Despite all that James and his fellows have said in defence of such an attitude, the majority of students still seem to be aware of something wrong in the attempt to regard the deep but vastly various convictions which men have about the truth of things as so many mental 'existences,' instead of using one's own best judgment concerning the truth of things to discriminate between them.

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[1] "Es gilt das Phänomenon in seiner Tatsächlichkeit und sachlichen Eigentümlichkeit zu kennen, ehe wir nach seinem Geltungswerte fragen können."—*Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. II, p. 492.

[2] "die erkenntnistheoretische Untersuchung nach der Gültigkeits= oder Wahrheitswert dieser psychischen Vorgänge."—*Ibid.*, p. 494.

[3] For Troeltsch's views, see especially his *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie in der Religionswissenschaft* (Tübingen, 1905) and "Wesen der Religion und der Religionswissenschaft" in *Kultur der Gegenwart* (reprinted in the second volume of his *Gesämmelte Werke*). For a not dissimilar view see Wobbermin, *Die religionspsychologische Methode in Religion und Theologie* (1913).

Thirdly, and consequently, it seems impossible to defend the distinction of the Psychology of Religion from the normative science of theology on the ground that all psychology treats the mind on purely "mechanistic" lines and excludes "from its purview all causes which lie outside the conscious process," and is in this way utterly different from the *Geisteswissenschaften* and philosophy. For why should psychology, even provisionally, invite us (in the words quoted above from the same writer—Professor Price) "to regard mental phenomena as finding their complete explanation within the mental series," if their *real* explanation lies elsewhere? If the religious experience is really of a trans-subjective kind, then it is difficult to see how any account or explanation of it which contains no trans-subjective reference can possibly be true, or can do anything else than mislead. And if a satisfactory intra-subjective explanation *can* be given, then what need is there to go on, in the name either of theology or of anything else, to any other? Similarly, in a parallel case, it would have to be said that if it were really possible to describe and explain the moral consciousness of men in a purely subjective sense, and without any reference to an objective standard of good and evil found to be determinative of that consciousness, we should then have to cease to believe in the existence of such a standard. Another parallel case is that of our thinking in general, concerning which we can but ask whether it is conceivable that a process of reasoning (such as the thinking out of a geometrical theorem) could be correctly and analytically 'described,' and all the successive steps of it satisfactorily 'explained,' without reference to the normative and objective logical laws by which it is at every point guided. We can only conclude, then, that if religious experience is as a matter of fact objectively determined in any degree, then any intra-subjective explanation of it is not only beside the point but is also definitely false.

It must often indeed have occurred to theologians to wonder why, side by side with their normative discipline of theology, the 'facts' of the religious consciousness should be held to require a separate kind of study, seeing that side by side with the normative science of ethics there seems to exist no separate study of the 'facts' of the moral consciousness; and to wonder also what our professors of ethics would have said if, in the eighteen-nineties, they had been offered, under the banner of a new science of the Psychology of Morals, a purely undiscriminating and 'existential' and even statistical collection of records of the moral notions and ideas, feelings and soul-stirrings (no matter whether sentimental or sober, morbid or healthy, psychopathic or normal, affected or sincere, shallow or profound, and what not else) of the people about them. Yet this is not to say that the psychology of morals has never been written. Indeed it has, and written well—and it is still a serious question whether it has ever been written better, or with a closer regard for the facts, than by Aristotle twenty-three centuries ago. In England it was written with a brilliance hardly nowadays to be matched (though we may, by slow degrees, have advanced in our understanding of it) by Bishop Butler, by Price, by Adam Smith, by Shaftesbury, by Hutcheson, by Reid; and in Germany by Kant. A notable modern treatment of it is Bosanquet's little *Psychology of the Moral Self*. But in all these cases what we have to do with is not an external inspection of our moral judgments in abstraction from their internal meaning as predicating value and claiming truth, but an attempt to understand them as they are known from the inside by ourselves who make them; and as so regarded, the psychology of morals has never been found to be in the end distinguishable from the science of ethics itself.

We may now briefly sum up our position with regard to the new Psychology of Religion. In essence it is a reaction against the almost exclusively speculative trend of theology from the beginning of mediæval Aristotelianism up to and including the *Aufklärung;* and as such it is not only in large measure justified but has performed a most valuable service. Yet James and his confrères were not the first to break with the speculative tradition, nor were they the first to concern themselves with the inward processes of the religious consciousness. The ancient Sophists had their own views about the psychology of religion. The *Euthyphro* treats of nothing else. The Stoics of the third century before Christ wrote books in answer to the question *How the idea of God arose in the soul of man.*[1] And in our modern world the speculative method in theology had met its Waterloo in Kant, and more particularly in Schleiermacher, long before the rise of the school of James. Moreover it has seemed to us that the kind of descriptive analysis of the religious consciousness which may be found within the Kantian and Schleiermacherian tradition, though doubtless still far from perfect, is in reality much profounder and more penetrating than any that has come from the newer school; and that accordingly a better psychology of religion is to be gleaned from the writings of theologians like Schleiermacher and Ritschl, Herrmann and Karl Heim, Sabatier and Gaston Frommel, George Tyrrell and the Baron von Hügel than from any of the recent text-books which explicitly claim to provide us with this material.

The result is that it is impossible to make any separation, save of the most temporary kind and in view of particular delegated inquiries, between a psychology of religion which understands its business and a philosophy of religion which looks upon itself as being in essence (in the words quoted from Professor Webb in an earlier chapter) "an attempt to understand Religion as it actually is, as it actually exists." When it is recognised that there is no room for a psychology of religion that is purely 'existential' or for a philosophy of religion that is purely speculative, then the two will meet in a theology whose business it is to organise the facts of the religious consciousness in the light of such standards of value and of truth as are found to be interiorly given in that consciousness itself.

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[1] Πόθεν θεῶν ἔννοιαν ἔλαβον ἄνθρωποι. *Cf., e. g.,* Aetius, *Plac.,* I, 6; Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.,* II, 5.

The real contribution made by the American school is thus not really the provision of a new method of inquiry but much rather consists in a number of separate contributions to the study of certain problems that had previously been neglected.[1] These might be set out somewhat as follows:

(*a*) an increased interest in, and investigation of, the genetic problem of the development of the individual from childhood through adolescence to manhood:
(*b*) an application of the knowledge thus obtained to the religious training of the young and of the adolescent:
(*c*) an increased attention to the phenomenon of conversion, especially in its relation to the phenomenon of adolescence:
(*d*) a study of temperamental differences in religion:
(*e*) a certain deepening of the inquiry into the religion of primitive peoples through more attention being paid to their inward thoughts and feelings and less to their external rites and institutions.

To which must be added the many original insights which came, if as often in spite of his method as by reason of it, to that truly remarkable genius, William James.

V Conclusion of Part I.

Our conclusion must be that, in the last analysis, there is only one service which scientific reflection can render to religion and only one point of view from which it can worthily approach it. There cannot therefore, in any final sense, be more than one science of religion.

Systematic Theology, Theology Natural and Revealed, the Philosophy of Religion, the Psychology of Religion, the Science of Religion or of Religions—these names are in no sense to be taken as representing so many parallel lines of study which can be separately defined and independently pursued.[1] For the most part they represent rather alternative views which have been taken by different groups of students as to the *one* line of study by which light may properly be thrown upon the problems presented to the scientific mind by the religious phenomenon. But some of them may also be taken as standing for narrower fields of inquiry that have been temporarily delegated for special study.

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[1] But I am out of sympathy with the sweeping condemnation of Emil Brunner, who says of "die Gruppe Leuba, King, Ames": "Ihnen ist, neben unbestreitbaren Verdiensten in einzelnen peripheren Fragen, das grosse Verdienst zuzuschreiben, die empirische Religionspsychologie deutlich *ad absurdum* geführt zu haben, indem sie sie radikaler anwandten, als ihre Vorgänger."—*Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*, 2 und 3 Aufl., p. 52.

This one science of religion we have ourselves preferred to call by its oldest and simplest name of theology; and we may now sum up what we have tried to say about it in the following way. When the traditional theology (following the lead given it by Schleiermacher and Ritschl) entirely gives up its speculative ways and turns itself into an attempt to understand religion from the inside, but at the same time (in departure from Schleiermacher and Ritschl) regards itself as having to do not merely with Protestant or with Christian religion but with religion as such; and when on the other hand the psychological and historical studies of religion give up the effort to dispense with those standards of good judgment which are interior to religion itself, and in consequence come also to view religion as from within; then all the various lines of study will meet in a science of religion that may at last be worthy of the name.[1]

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[1] A good example of the attempt to regard them in this way is furnished by Principal Garvie's little book, *Tutors unto Christ, Introduction to the Study of Religions*. Here are distinguished (1) "*the descriptive or narrative treatment of religions*"; (2) "*the comparative study of religions*"; (3) "a goal to the comparative study of religions which must be the starting-point of another method of the study of religion, *the psychology of religion*"; (4) "*the philosophy of religion*," whose task it is to "relate religion to the other activities of man"; (5) "*the philosophy of theism*," whose task it is to transform the assurance of faith "into certainty for the reason of man"; (6) "*theology*," whose task is thus described: "A believer in a religion may be so convinced that it is true that he desires no service from philosophy to confirm its value and validity for him; and yet he may desire to present it to himself in as intelligible a form as he can. He may exercise his reason upon it to test and to show its intellectual consistency. This may be called the *theological* study." This again is subdivided into (*a*) *dogmatics* and (*b*) *apologetics*, as follows: "If he assumes the truth, and seeks only to expound it, his theology is *dogmatic*. But if he recognises any obligation to harmonise the truth, as he holds it, with truth as science and philosophy present it, his theology is *apologetic*, and thus very easily becomes merged again in the philosophy of religion or of theism." (P. 12.) Especially does Principal Garvie keep the science and the philosophy of religion very rigidly apart, on the theory that "science knows nothing of values" and that all judgments of value should therefore be "reserved for the philosophy of religion, and excluded from the science," (P. 6.) But is there then no such thing as a *normative* science? Yet it is difficult to believe that Principal Garvie is entirely consistent; for when he does come to speak of a standard of value, it is not in the last chapter, which deals with the philosophy of religion, but in a chapter prior to that and called "The Method of Judgment," which begins by affirming that "we are entitled to reach judgments of value in the comparative study of religion." (P. 163.) How external the proposed standards of value or "methods of judgment" are, may be seen not only from such a statement as that "a striking proof of the insufficiency of a religion is its displacement by another, or more often the formation of sects within it" (p. 168), but also from the Principal's final summary: "The religions may be regarded as superior in the measure in which they seek the moral and spiritual rather than the natural goods, offer redemption to man, are literary and historical, look back to a great religious personality as founder, and have shown their universal intention by their missionary effort." (P. 184.)

[1] I am well aware that in what I have here said regarding the Psychology of Religion there is implied a view of the standpoint of psychology in general, and of the relation of psychology to the normative sciences in particular, which is different from that most widely current at the present time. In defence of my view I had written a considerable appendix, which I called 'The Relation of Psychology to the Normative Sciences,' and which was intended to appear at the end of the present chapter. Considerations of space have forced me to omit it, but I hope it may soon appear as an independent essay in one of the philosophical journals. Meanwhile the argument of the chapter can, I think, stand upon its own feet.

PART II

THE INQUIRY

CHAPTER I

THE PHENOMENON OF FAITH

The Phenomenon Brought into Clear Focus.

PERHAPS we have already lingered too long in that region of methodology which Ritschl used somewhat unkindly to describe as the Court of the Gentiles. At all events it is now high time to leave behind the preliminary description of our method and proceed to its actual use.

The task before us is the analysis of religious faith. But, when we set ourselves to undertake any scientific analysis, the first prerequisite is that we have the phenomenon to be analysed very clearly before us—as it were on the dissecting-table. As certain natural scientists are accustomed to put it, we must begin by "isolating our phenomenon"—that is to say, by getting it before us, as far as may be, in its purity and in segregation from other things with which it is sometimes found combined. This first chapter will therefore mainly be devoted to satisfying this preliminary condition. We must try to do what we can towards isolating the religious phenomenon. Not only must we be agreed as to what fact of human experience we are designating by the word religion and its equivalents, but we must have that fact standing out on the mind's dissecting-table in the clearest possible contrast to those other elements in human experience that are most likely to be confused with it. It is true, certainly, that the task is a much more delicate and difficult one than any corresponding task that confronts the chemist or the diagnostician. Mental analysis has ever been a more delicate business than the analysis of matter; and there is perhaps no part of our mental life that has hitherto proved more elusive to analysis than our religion. "I could wish," cried Schleiermacher, as he embarked on his famous analysis of religion ~~in the~~ *Reden*, "to exhibit religion in some well-known form by reminding you, by feature, carriage, and deportment, of what here and there at least you have seen in life. Religion, however, as I wish to show it, which is to say, in its original, characteristic form, is not accustomed to appear openly, but is only seen in secret by those who love it."[1] Nevertheless there is something which we can do. For there are some situations in human experience in which what we call religious faith stands out in particularly bold relief, because in them it stands in contrast and opposition to the other mental elements that go to make up the situation; and not, as at other and happier times, in harmony and agreement with them. And such situations are capable of description in the most general terms, so that the theologian may hold them in his mind as preliminary data.

We need not go very far afield in our search for such cases. Let us think, to begin with, of a man of high character and noble ideals who nevertheless seems to be haunted by crippling misfortune. He has put the things of the soul above the things of the body; he has put the things of others above his own things; he has worked hard and selflessly; he has ever tried to 'do his bit'—as the soldiers used to say, and to live with a single eye to the service of the highest ends. And yet everything has seemed to conspire against him. Sickness comes and renders impossible the achievement of his plans. Grinding poverty follows. His loved ones die—perhaps ere their life's opportunity has properly begun, and the remembrance of them is cut off from the earth. And he knows that very soon death will come to him too, to quench forever his ardent spirit and abruptly set a term to his endeavours; and that, so far as experience has ever shown,

"nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda."

In spite of all his good intentions and honest efforts, his life seems utterly wasted. Nothing at all seems to survive of the temple of his dreams or of the work of his hands, nor even anything of the fruit of his body which might give some slender continuance to the vital thing that was in him. For so has it been determined for him by the all-powerful order of things from which he has sprung. That such a case is an unfamiliar one nobody would venture to assert. On the contrary, every element that goes to make it up is of the very warp and woof of our common human experience, and the literature of every nation would afford many examples of these elements in just such a combination as is here described. Perhaps the most classical of all examples is that of Job. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."[1] That is not the expression of any philosophy, it is a bald statement of plain fact.

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[1] Oman's translation, pp. 26–27.

What then is the natural inference which we should expect thinking man in all ages to have drawn from these facts? And in the particular case we have sketched, what inference as to the ultimate meaning of things would we expect our sorely harassed hero to draw? Well, there can be no doubt as to what inference lies most ready to his hand. It is that the universal order of things, in whose hands he is as potter's clay, is purely indifferent to all the issues of his life, and blind as a stone to all the values which he has tried to make supreme. Can there be any doubt that this is the explanation which most readily and simply explains the experienced facts?

And yet the plain truth is that this is not the explanation which mankind has on the whole embraced. The overwhelming majority of those members of our race who have found themselves confronted with such a situation as we have described have refrained from concluding straightway that they are the playthings of an indifferent fate and that our human life is therefore but

> "a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Something has kept them back from this conclusion. Something else has come into the reckoning—to disturb the natural tenor of the process of induction from experienced facts and make them feel that the simplest explanation is not after all the true one, and that things are not what they seem to be. They have believed that their misfortune spelled not Heaven's indifference but Heaven's discipline; and that what looked like heedlessness or even cruelty was in truth nothing less than a deeper Wisdom and a more discriminating Love.

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[1] Job 14 : 1–2.

In this new element, this 'something else,' we recognise, in however rudimentary and germinal a form, the phenomenon of faith. If in such crises of human experience the inference from man's adversity to Heaven's indifference had always been allowed to pass without challenge, then there would never have been any such thing as religion in the world; but in the fact that there is something in us all which refuses, or at the very least tends to refuse, so to let it pass, we can detect what looks like the ultimate germ from which all religion springs. Perhaps we may designate our unknown disturbing factor in a very provisional way as a sense of trust; for that word seems the best suited to emphasise the significant fact that we have here to do with an attitude of mind which, far from being based on the evidence of the observed facts of the case itself, seems rather to maintain itself in spite of them.

The second case we are to consider is one in which the phenomenon of faith, though appearing in a somewhat different light, yet stands out in perhaps even clearer isolation from the other factors present. It is the all-too familiar case of a conflict in a man's mind between faith and natural science. This, of course, is a mental situation which became possible only at a comparatively late stage in the history of our race. Perhaps the nineteenth century will always be remembered as an age in which this conflict seemed to reach something of a climax, and yet it is doubtful whether, within the narrower confines of a single Greek city-state, the situation was not just as poignantly familiar in the Athens of 350 B. C.[1]

Let us think of a young man, of serious mind and high ideals of conduct, who sets himself to the study of natural science, as he has perhaps already set himself to many other studies, in the hope of finding some new light on the great riddle of existence. He is a nineteenth-century student, and he reads Darwin and Huxley and Tyndall and perhaps Haeckel, and is carried away by their arguments. Until now he has believed in God. He has grown up believing that a Divine Mind is present behind nature as its creator and sustainer, its designer and its guide. But ever as he reads, this being grows more shadowy. The world, in his gradually changing conception of it, seems to get on better and better without God; until at last, like Laplace, he "sees no need for the hypothesis" of a Divine Being at all. It now seems to him that the universe is a purely material system, quite meaningless and fortuitous from the point of view of reason and rational significance. With what appears to him the relentless logic of fact he is driven to agree—in the terrible words of a writer of our own generation—"that Man is the product of causes that had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins."[1] In a word, he sees nothing for it but to accept a thoroughgoing naturalistic philosophy.

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[1] See the opening pages of the tenth book of Plato's *Laws*.

And now is that all? Have we told the whole story? Does what we have written express the whole state of our student's mind? No, that is never all.

There is always a part of us that revolts against any such conclusion, a part of us that protests—that seems outraged and insulted. And (let us once more mark it well) it is not as if it were the evidence of our senses that was insulted, or the coherence of our thought, or anything like that. Our student may not be able to see any flaw at all in the proved case for naturalism—we are supposing that he is not able. The facts may seem to him to be well enough explained and the laws of sound reasoning to have been rigidly followed. But there is something else within him that recoils, some other and very different part of his nature that cannot rest content with the *dénouement* that is now suggested. This sense of recoil may be present in very varying degrees, and often it may be all but completely suppressed. Yet it is difficult to think that it is ever so entirely absent as not even to require the effort of suppression.

Even such wish for is implicit faith.

Of the many poignant records of this kind of experience of which the literature of the nineteenth century is full, none perhaps is more instructive in its absolute frankness and sincerity than the celebrated *Journal intime* of Henri-Frédéric Amiel. Indeed the young Genevan teacher might almost have been the original from which our student's case was sketched. As has been well said:

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[1] Bertrand Russell in *A Free Man's Worship*.

> "To this company Amiel belonged. . . . With his intellect he accepted the universe of science, with his heart he admitted the necessity of religion and morality. He spent his life trying to find a place for the one in the other. In his intense and unremitting effort to reconcile them, he reached strange ecstasies and strange despairs. He sounded in his soul the whole octave of the nineteenth-century consciousness, and left a record of his experience in a book which has become, as it deserved to become, a minor classic of the century he lived in."[1]

The sense of revolt against the non-religious presentation of things is here said to come from the *heart*, which is contrasted with the mind or intellect; and this highly symbolical usage is perhaps the nearest thing in popular and poetical terminology to an adequate expression of the "two parts of us" that enter into the conflict. Another illustration may be taken from words spoken by Frederick W. Robertson from his Brighton pulpit in 1851:

> "There are few more glorious moments of our Humanity than those in which Faith does battle against intellectual proof: when, for example, after reading a sceptical book, or hearing a cold-blooded materialist's demonstration, in which God, the soul, and life to come, are proved impossible—up rises the heart in all the giant might of its immortality to do battle with the understanding, and with the simple argument, 'I *feel* them in my best and highest moments to be true,' annihilates the sophistries of logic."[2]

From almost any of the great intellectual poets of Victorian England—from Tennyson, Browning, Clough, Arnold—equally relevant quotations could be made. It will be enough, however, to quote some well-known lines of the first-mentioned and greatest of these, lines in which, albeit by means of a makeshift psychological terminology, the situation we have had in mind is perfectly described.

> "I found Him not in world or sun,
> Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;

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[1] (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 29, 1921.

[2] *Sermons*, second series, p. 100.

Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep
I heard a voice 'believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within my breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.' "[1]

Now it is not difficult to recognise in this sense of recoil the most rudimentary and inarticulate form of what, in its more developed forms, is well known to us as religious faith. The dissatisfaction or revolt that arises in our student's mind, the 'warmth within his breast,' the 'standing up of the heart,' the vague feeling that some very fundamental part of his nature is being rudely handled—or however else we may choose to designate this unquestionable experience—is ultimately the same phenomenon that has inspired the formation of the great religious systems of the world, that has made the creeds and built the temples and prompted their sacrifice and ritual. Inarticulate as it may appear in such an instance as we have chosen, it is nevertheless to be recognised as bearing the closest family relationship even to such a cry as this:

> "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[2]

However distrustful we may be of some of William James' flights into more speculative regions, it is always a good thing to have that truly great observer with us when the matter in hand is a report of actual experience. It is therefore a pleasure to be able here to set down the following passage from one of his published letters to Professor Leuba, which admirably expresses what we have been trying to say:

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[1] Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, canto CXXIV. *In Memoriam* was published in the middle year of the century, 1850, and there is no doubt that the influence of the above-quoted passage is visible in the passage just quoted from Robertson and dating from the following year. Robertson, it will be remembered, published *An Analysis of Mr. Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.'*

[2] Psalm 73: 23–26.

> "My personal position is simple. I have no living sense of commerce with a God. I envy those who have, for I know the addition of such a sense would help me immensely. The Divine, for my *active* life, is limited to abstract concepts which, as ideals, interest and determine me, but do so but faintly, in comparison with what a feeling of God might effect, if I had one. It is largely a question of intensity, but differences of intensity may make one's whole centre of energy shift. Now, although I am so devoid of *Gottesbewusstsein* in the directer and stronger sense, yet there is *something in me* which *makes response* when I hear utterances made from that lead by others. I recognise the deeper voice. Something tells me, '*thither lies truth*'—and I am *sure* it is not old theistic habits and prejudices of infancy. Those are Christian; and I have grown so out of Christianity that entanglement therewith on the part of a mystical utterance has to be abstracted from and overcome, before I can listen. Call this, if you like, my mystical germ. It is a very common germ. It creates the rank and file of believers. As it withstands in my case, so it will withstand in most cases, all purely atheistic criticism, but *interpretative* criticism (not of the mere 'hysteria' and 'nerves' order) it can energetically combine with. Your only consistent position, it strikes me, would be a dogmatic atheistic naturalism; and without any mystical germ in us, that, I believe, is where we all should *unhesitatingly* be to-day. Once allow the mystical germ to influence our beliefs, and I believe that we are in my position."[1]

It will not be denied that the 'something else,' the unknown *x*, in both the situations we have described is one and the same phenomenon. The 'sense of trust' that keeps the sorely tried man from regarding his trials as the dispensations of an indifferent fate is clearly to be identified with the 'sense of recoil' which the student feels against the presented picture of the "ever-breaking shore that tumbles in the Godless deep." And both are identical also with what James called that 'something in him which made response' when he heard men speak of God.[2]

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[1] *Letters of William James* (American ed.), vol. II, pp. 211–212. The letter is dated 17th. April 1904. *Cf.* also the concluding paragraph of the same writer's *Gifford Lectures:* "I *can*, of course, put myself into the sectarian scientist's attitude, and imagine vividly that the world of sensations and of scientific laws and objects may be all. But whenever I do this, I hear that inward monitor of which W. K. Clifford once wrote, whispering the word 'bosh!'" (P. 519.)

[2] One more illustration may here be set down. "Very commonly," says Mr. Lowes Dickinson, "it expresses itself in the form of what is called a 'belief in God'; an attitude, however, which does not imply any very definite nor any very uniform conception of God, but is apt, rather, to manifest itself negatively in *a kind of distress* if the existence of God is denied. And the root of that distress is, I think, the suggested inference that things are all wrong and not at all right; or, to vary the phrase, one may perhaps say that faith involves a volitional assumption that things, *whatever appearances may suggest*, are really 'worth while.' "—*Religion: a Criticism and a Forecast*, New York, 1905, pp. 78–79. Italics mine.

And now the question is, *What is this something else?* Whence does it hail? Into what psychical factors can it be analysed? Of what more familiar and better-understood elements is it compact? And, since it clearly has something (however inarticulate) to say, seeming always to make its voice more or less heard in the soul's debate with itself about the ultimate meaning of life, what exactly is it that it tells us? And what kind of authority, if any, does it carry with it? These questions constitute the theological problem. It is just the emergence of this 'something else' that provides theology with its problem, and if it did not emerge, theology would then be out of business.

We have spoken of this 'something else' as a *sense*—of trust or of recoil or of sympathetic response, as the case may be. We have not done this because we wished to imply in advance any view as to its nature such as would be most suitably expressed by means of this word; on the contrary, it is just because we could find no more colourless or non-committal word than this one that we have elected to use it. In daily parlance 'sense' is constantly used to mean a vague awareness of any sort, and in this usage it carries no suggestion at all of an implied resemblance to sensation or sense-perception. James, as we saw, suggests that we might call it 'our mystical germ.' Perhaps at this stage it does not much matter what vocal sign we use to express our meaning so long as we have the thing signified before us in clear memory and imagination, and do our best to rid ourselves of such initial prejudices about its nature as are imported from other sources instead of coming (as initial prejudices always should come) from our own past experience of the thing itself.

At the same time, it is just the closer determination of the psychic nature of this sense or awareness that must next occupy us. Into what mental factors, we must ask, can faith be resolved or—if it turn out not to be a complex phenomenon—with what single mental factor is it to be assimilated? Is it really 'sense' in the narrower and exact meaning of the word? Or is it 'feeling'? Or is it after all our 'reason' that is here asserting itself? And if it is reason, then how ~~is the~~ reason that inspires religious faith to be distinguished from the reason that inspires scientific knowledge? Or, possibly, is there no such distinction, so that

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religion is just rudimentary science or metaphysic, and our student's 'sense of recoil' was but the ghost of a dead philosophy rising up to curse the new enlightenment that had usurped its place? Such are some of the guesses that have been made and that will come up for review in the immediately succeeding chapters.

Is It merely a child of our wishes?

II

The remainder of the present chapter we shall devote to the consideration of a number of guesses that need not hold us quite so long, it being comparatively easy to decide that they do not really succeed in explaining the phenomenon before us.

And first, there is the simplest and most ready-to-hand explanation of all—the view which reduces religion to a mere creature of the imagination working in the service of our subjective desires. This is a view which was canvassed in the ancient world by more than one writer of the Epicurean school, appearing again and again in the form of the dictum that mankind's earliest gods were born of fear;[1] and in the modern world it has seldom gone quite unrepresented. We may perhaps imagine a modern representative of this view addressing us somewhat as follows: "There is nothing at all in the sense of trust and sense of recoil that you found to be present in the two typical situations which you analysed. The sense of trust was nothing but the man shutting his eyes to the bleakly unwelcome truth, as the ostrich buries its head in the sand to hide the vision of the approaching enemy. The sense of recoil was nothing but a sense of what is vulgarly known as unpleasant surprise in the mind of the student; the facts were not to his liking—that was all. And that is all there ever is in religion; it is allowing one's personal preferences to interfere with one's recognition of the truth; it is believing what one wants to believe." 1

The fullest and most consistent working out of this view of religion is probably to be found in the works of Ludwig Feuerbach. According to Feuerbach, the gods of religion, and all the other transcendent objects whereof religion discourses, are mere *Wunschwesen,* or 'wish-beings.' His own philosophy—a sensationalistic variety of positivism—did not leave room for the knowledge of any reality outside of the human consciousness itself; and so what are called gods could be only "the creations of the subjective spirit of man," "personified wishes."[1] "Religion," he says more fully, "is the dream of the human mind. But even in dreams we do not find ourselves in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality; we only see real things in the entrancing splendour of imagination or caprice, instead of in the simple daylight of reality and necessity. Hence I do nothing more to religion than to open its eyes. . . ."[2] When religion's eyes are opened it sees that what it has hitherto believed to be the realities of a trans-subjective sphere are but the needs and desires and longings which man has harboured in his own heart. God is thus another name for man as he would like himself to be. "Feeling makes God a man, but for the same reason it makes man a god."[3]

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[1] The best known form of the dictum is probably that of Statius (*Thebais*, III, 360 f.):

> "Primus in orbe deos fecit timor, ardua cœli
> Fulmina dum caderent. . . ."

But Statius is here borrowing from Petronius and Lucretius.

In our own time this view of Feuerbach's has been revived (though as yet only very tentatively) by a number of the leading exponents of psychoanalysis. In the pages of Freud and Jung the gods of religion once more appear as mere *Wunschwesen*, as creations of what they call wish-thinking or, more technically, *autistic* thinking. It is held that in the endeavour to escape from intolerable mental conflict we usually have unconscious resort to the "repression" of our unrealisable wishes, but sometimes also to their "projection"; and that God is nothing but such a projection into the unknown Beyond of our own purely subjective desires. Here are Freud's own words:

> "I believe that a large portion of the mythological conception of the world which reaches far into the most modern religions is *nothing but psychology projected into the outer world.* The dim perception (the endopsychic perception, as it were) of psychic factors and relations of the unconscious was taken as a model in the construction of a *transcendental reality,* which is destined to be changed again by science into *psychology of the unconscious.*
>
> "It is difficult to express it in other terms; the analogy to paranoia must

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[1] "Schöpfungen des subjektiven Menschengeistes," "personifizierte Wünsche."

[2] *Das Wesen des Christentums,* preface to 2d ed. (George Eliot's transl., p. xi).

[3] *Ibid.,* appendix, 1.

here come to our aid. We venture to explain in this way the myths of paradise and the fall of man, of God, of good and evil, of immortality, and the like—that is to transform *metaphysics* into *metapsychology*. The gap between the paranoiac's displacement and that of superstition is narrower than appears at first sight."[1]

Now it is not to be denied that this way of looking at religion rests upon a real perception of truth. Clearly Feuerbach and Freud have noticed something about the religious phenomenon that has sometimes been hidden from wiser men and that, when properly understood, has in it much possibility of enlightenment. It is said, for instance, that Feuerbach's writings were one of the sources of stimulation of so significant a modern theology as that of Ritschl; and we can readily see how this might be. For it is profoundly true that our human idea of God must of necessity be compacted from the knowledge of such attributes of Spirit as we can observe in our own spirits. In this sense Heine's taunt that "if God made man in His own image, man made haste to return the compliment" may be accepted by religion as a true and accurate description of its own source of insight. It is just *because* God has made us in His image, and has written His law in our hearts, that it is at all possible for us to know what He Himself is like. To realise that man attains to the idea of God by projecting a construct of his own spiritual experience upon the screen of the Beyond is thus to realise a deep truth. The only question at issue is as to the nature of the compulsion which leads man to make this projection and so to believe in the reality of God. According to Feuerbach and Freud, the compulsion in question is nothing else than mere subjective wish or desire. It is here that we must beg to differ. The view that there is no deeper necessity behind belief in God than the mere necessity of believing what we *want* to believe seems indeed, in view of the facts of our own experience of it, to be hardly worthy of serious rebuttal. It is surely contrary to anything we know of human nature to suppose that man thus tends to objectify his own 'castles in the air' and comes to believe with a firm and steady conviction that they represent facts of the most solid kind. It is surely absurd to suggest that "the gap between the paranoiac's displacement and that of superstition," which in Freud's terminology is the same as to say that of all human religion, is so almost imperceptibly narrow as this theory implies; for that would seem to mean nothing less than that all the world, except the few isolated souls who have definitely turned their backs on religious ways of thought, are in a state of mind not properly distinguishable from incipient madness! As has been wisely said by one of our most distinguished psychotherapists: "To generalise and use the pathological conception of projection in dealing with normal psychology is an illegitimate use of the concept. The normal mind is one thing, the abnormal mind is another, and the mere fact that abnormal tendencies may be present in any man, however apparently normal, does not alter that distinction."[1]

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[1] *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Eng. transl., pp. 309–310. This is about all that Freud himself has to say in the matter, but some of his followers have more elaborately developed the suggestion he here throws out.

The truth is that the verities of religion are often very far from being what men *want* to believe. Much rather are they what men feel they *must* believe, whether they want to or no. "Men hate and despise religion," we read in Pascal's *Pensées*, "but they are afraid it may be true."[2] And no theory of religion can hope to stand that does not take full account of this plain element of obligation which it invariably contains. If all that Feuerbach and Freud say were true, we should expect to find in historical religion a glorification of self-seeking instead of what we do find—the most rigorous self-denial and self-sacrifice and the belief in a God Who demands of men things almost impossible to perform. Had these writers said that religion stands not for what man wants to be true but for what he feels *ought* to be true, our criticism of them would read very differently; but the distinction that is here indicated is an entirely vital one. If the verities of religion represent no more than our private likes and dislikes, then clearly there is no need to trouble our heads any further about them. But if they should turn out to be related not to our wishes and our whims but to our duties and obligations, then it is by no means so certain that they are to be thus lightly dismissed as mere subjective illusions.

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[1] William Brown, as quoted by Selbie in his *Psychology of Religion*, p. 296.

[2] Ed. Brunschvicg, 187.

III

Is a mere Survival of Primitive Beliefs.

The other main type of explanation of religion which here falls to be considered is that which treats it as being essentially a *survival*—taking the real father of our thoughts of God to be not so much wish as *tradition*. What its advocates would say to us is something like this: "The sense of trust and the sense of recoil in your two examples, and James' 'something within me which makes response,' are due entirely to the fact of religious upbringing. You feel, you say, that the religious view of things must be true; but that is only because your mind has been taught to run along its well-worn grooves almost from earliest infancy. Once, long ago, religion got started. Once, long ago, there somehow arose belief in gods. Indeed, we know how it arose, for we have studied primitive history. And we know that it could not possibly arise in the same way to-day, because we live now in a very different world of thought. But once such a belief was started, the power of tradition was in itself sufficient to secure its almost indefinite perpetuation in the racial mind."

It will be immediately clear that all explanations of this type contain two separate parts:

(*a*) the doctrine, common to all of them, that what is now known to us as religious faith can be entirely accounted for by reference to the power of tradition to perpetuate a belief once started, and

(*b*) some theory as to how the belief in question actually *was* started.

(a) The former doctrine we have already had occasion to criticise somewhat fully in dealing with methodology,[1] and to what was there said only a very little need here be added. The view that religion had its rise in some primitive habit of mind that has now long ago disappeared from the world, and that it is kept alive only by the power of tradition, does not, in fact, accord with the simplest results of our common observation of the religious phenomenon. That the impulse (whatever it was) which first led men to believe in God still persists in our own souls to-day; that even if our mothers and fathers had not taught us to believe in God, we should ourselves in due time have invented something very like Him; that the outlook on life for which religion stands finds response in some element of our human nature that is deeper-seated than any merely inculcated teaching—these things are so certainly true as to put out of court any theory of religion which gives *one* explanation of its origin and *another* explanation of its present power. In religion, as in life generally, the phylogenetic order repeats itself in the ontogenetic. But indeed we need go no further than the direct witness of our own experience in order to find warranty for the assertion that the Christian "full assurance of faith" is something more than the surviving power of early instilled habits of thought. "I am sure," wrote William James in the passage we quoted, "that it is not old theistic habits and prejudices of infancy"; and there will be many who will feel that that is all that there is to say, and that need be said, on this whole matter.

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[1] See pp. 95–100.

Nevertheless it will be profitable to look a little more closely at the second half of this type of explanation of religion, that is to say, at some of the theories which have been put forward to account for the historical origin of religious belief without making any appeal to that religious consciousness which we ourselves nowadays possess.

And first we may look at those theories which would trace the origin of religious beliefs to the conscious invention of individuals who, for one reason or another, foisted them upon the multitude. This type of view originated among the Greek Sophists, and indeed it might not unfairly be named the Sophistic theory of religion. "These people," says Plato, clearly referring to the Sophists, "hold that the gods exist not by nature but by art and by the laws of states, which are different in different places according to the convention of those who make them."[1] A good example of this kind of view is that put forward by Critias in a surviving fragment of a drama called *Sisyphus*—a fragment which has sometimes, though without sufficient reason, been attributed to Euripides the tragedian. There was a time, he tells us, when men lived without law, and brute force reigned supreme, as in the animal world it still does. Then law or social restraint was discovered as a means of preventing violence. This it successfully did, but it was powerless to prevent secret crime; so there arose a clever statesman who persuaded the people that there were immortal gods able to see and hear and know even the most hidden things, and in order to increase men's awe of them, he said that they dwelt in the sky and that the sun and moon and stars were the work of their hands. 'Primitive credulity' did the rest. Of course the thing was a patent invention. The man was only "covering up the truth with a lying word," says Critias. But it was practically useful in serving the purpose for which it was intended.[1] This Sophistic view has powerfully affected modern thought, which it has reached through the medium of Roman Stoicism. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was very commonly hinted that the positive religions go back for their origin to the inventiveness of wise rulers and are in essence but "a politic Trick invented by Statesmen to awe the credulous Vulgar."[2] Even so enlightened a thinker as Thomas Hobbes followed this trail to a surprising extent. Though, as we shall see, he proposed another origin for the fundamental belief in gods which is common to all religions, he taught that we must look to the civil authority alone for decisions on individual doctrines; for essentially, as he once put it, "religion is not philosophy, but law." Those doctrines, he explained, are to be accepted which are part of the established religion of the state; all else is superstition. Nor is there any good in prying too closely into what the civil authority decrees; "for it is with the mysteries of our Religion, as with wholsome pills for the sick, which swallowed whole have the vertue to cure; but chewed, are for the most part cast up again without effect."[3] A variant of what is at bottom the same view is the idea, so universally prevalent among the eighteenth-century Deists, that the positive religions largely go back to the deliberate inventions of priests who manufactured them for their own private ends. To Voltaire, for instance, the whole system of Christian belief seemed to be but the fruit of so many coarse attempts on the part of wily ecclesiastics to cheat the simple populace. "*Écrasez l'infâme!*" was his cry. It is true that Voltaire, like all the more distinguished writers, believed that there was an essence common to all religions which was not so simply to be explained away; but this reservation was by no means always made by the more vulgar among those earliest modern opponents of Christianity. Perhaps at this time of day it would be superfluous to say anything in criticism of this type of theory; for the modern study of primitive history has at least made one thing certain with reference to the beginnings of religion—that if there was any deception in the matter, it was self-deception, and that the priests and the kings, if indeed they cheated the people, did so only because they had first cheated themselves.

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[1] *Laws*, 889.

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[1] The fragment will be found in Diels' *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, p. 571.

[2] John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, ch. IV.

[3] *Leviathan*, ch. XXXII.

We turn next to a group of theories which have a little more to commend them. The first is one which dates back to another of the Sophists—to Prodicus of Ceos. "Primitive man," says this writer, "made gods of sun and moon, of rivers and fountains, in a word, of whatever is beneficial to life, in return for the services they render—just as the Egyptians make a god of the Nile. So they called bread Demeter, wine Dionysus, water Poseidon, fire Hephæstus, and so with all serviceable things."[1] This theory took some considerable hold in Alexandrian Greece, commending itself especially to the Stoic Persæus;[2] but even in ancient times it was recognised that not all human religion could be thus explained as nature-worship. A far more popular and influential theory was therefore that which was for long known as Euhemerism—so called from the name of its earliest propounder, Euhemerus, who flourished in the middle of the third century before Christ. The thesis put forward by Euhemerus, in a book which was from the beginning a scandal to the pious, was that religion originally sprang from nothing else than what we now call hero-worship, the gods being in origin merely distinguished men who gradually became deified in the popular memory.[3] It will at once be seen that this hero-worship theory of religion is virtually identical with the ancestor-worship theory which we now connect with the name of Herbert Spencer—the only difference being that Spencer has made a notable further attempt to explain how it could be that dead men should thus come to be thought of as living on as gods. The savage, we are now told, dreams; in his dream he sees his dead father; he thinks that what he has seen has some objective reality, and he calls it his father's double or ghost, which he therefore supposes to be still alive. Hence arises the cult of ancestors; for there will be certain places (such as the dead man's grave) which the spirit will be supposed to haunt, and these will become sacred; and the spirit is regarded as having at the same time certain needs which man can supply and certain kinds of help which he can give to man in return.[1] It is with Spencer's name that we now connect this explanation, but not even this can be held to have originated with him; for here is the account given in the seventeenth century by Hobbes of the origin of that central belief in gods which he believed to be common to every form of religion:

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[1] Diels, *Fragmente*, p. 540.

[2] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, I. 15.

[3] Much the best account of Euhemerism is that given by Paul Decharme, *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs*, pp. 371–393.

> "And for the matter, or substance of the Invisible Agents, so fancyed; they could not by naturall cogitation, fall upon any other conceipt, but that it was the same with that of the Soule of man; and that the Soule of man, was of the same substance, with that which appeareth in a dream, to one that sleepeth; or in a Looking-glasse to one that is awake; which, men not knowing that such apparitions are nothing else but creatures of the Fancy, think to be reall, and externall Substances; and therefore call them Ghosts; as the Latines called them *Imagines*, and *Umbrae;* and thought them Spirits, that is, thin aereall bodies; and those Invisible Agents, which they feared, to bee like them; save that they appear, and vanish when they please."[2]

Now it will not be denied that "Euhemerism" and the "Ghost Theory" contain, no less than the other hypotheses which we have been considering, some ponderable element of truth. There is no doubt at all that the origin of some gods is to be traced to historical human personages;[3] and there is as little doubt that ancestor-worship is one important form which religion tends to take in certain societies. But that all mankind's gods can be so accounted for, or that the cult of ancestors is the one original form of religion, cannot be regarded as likely from any point of view. To begin with, the palæanthropological evidence is now quite generally held to be against Spencer's theory; for it is said that, however many may be the proofs of the reverence with which ancestors are regarded among savage peoples, there is no clear evidence of anything like the *worship* of ancestors until a much higher stage of culture is reached. As Durkheim says:

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[1] See *Principles of Sociology*, vol. I, part I.

[2] *Leviathan*, ch. XII.

[3] "Although we have been rescued from the fallacy that ensnared Herbert Spencer and others that ancestor-worship and hero-worship was the foundation of all religion, there is no doubt that it has been an independent and prolific source of polytheism; for the heroized ancestor under favourable conditions could rise to the status of a high god, as a court-physician rose in Egypt, and as we may believe was the career of the Hellenic Asklepios; and in parts of Christendom the local saint might count so much for the village community as to entitle him to the status and designation of a local god."—L. R. Farnell, *The Attributes of God*, pp. 66–67.

> "If, as the hypothesis of the animists supposes, the first sacred beings were really the souls of the dead and the first cult that of the ancestors, it should be found that the lower the societies examined are, the more the place given to this cult in the religious life. But it is rather the contrary which is true. The ancestral cult is not greatly developed, or even presented under a characteristic form, except in advanced societies like those of China, Egypt, or the Greek and Latin cities; on the other hand, it is completely lacking in the Australian societies which . . . represent the lowest and simplest form of social organisation which we know."[1]

Or, as a still more recent authority has it:

> "The ethnographic evidence decidedly contradicts the assumption that ancestor-worship was the earliest form of worship, for nowhere is the cult of ancestors found among most primitive tribes; while its more developed forms do not make their appearance until relatively high civilisations are reached, such as those of Polynesia and Melanesia. Full-fledged ancestor-worship, in fact, does not arise until a social basis is provided for it by that hypertrophy of the family instinct which lies at the root of the ancestral cult of ancient China and Japan. And it is, of course, quite obvious that religion seized upon man's relation to inanimate nature, to plants, and, above all, to animals, without waiting until an obliging ghost appeared in animal, plant, or other rational disguise."[2]

Yet it is not on such palæanthropological evidence that we should ourselves rely for our criticism of the notion that what we now know as faith in God goes back for its prime origination and explanation to the fear of ghosts, or that (in the recent words of one who still clings to this view, Sir J. G. Frazer) "the fear of the human dead" has been "probably the most powerful force in the making of human religion."[3] What we should rely on is much rather our inside acquaintance with the phenomenon of faith as we experience it, in the first instance, in our own souls. It may indeed be true that Spencer and his forerunner, Tylor, have, in developing the ghost-theory which was long ago suggested by

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[1] *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Eng. transl., p. 63.

[2] A. A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilisation*, pp. 332–333.

[3] In the preface to the one-volume edition of *The Golden Bough*.

Hobbes, made a real contribution to the explanation of the origin of the animistic outlook. It may well be, that is to say, that it was the dream that first suggested the ghost, and that it was the ghost that first made it possible for men to conceive of spirits and souls. But, as we have already contended, and as we shall have occasion to argue more fully in a later chapter, the belief in spirits and souls has in itself nothing about it that is really worthy to be called religious. What religion is, that we know in our own experience; and on the basis of this knowledge alone we feel justified in laying it down that the fear of ghosts could not conceivably have given rise to any genuinely religious manifestation unless a prior disposition to religious faith and worship had already existed in the soul of man. And what is that but another way of saying that the real origin of religion is to be sought not in the fear of ghosts, or in anything like it, but in that which had power to seize upon this fear (as upon so many other things) and mould it to its own characteristic ends? This has now been granted by the majority of competent students of primitive culture, who have accordingly gone so far as to allow the possibility, and even the likelihood, of the existence among primitive men, prior to all belief in spiritual beings, of an impulse which is very recognisably related to those of our own impulses which we are wont to call religious.

We have now dealt with what are perhaps the most notable of the attempts that have been made, alike in ancient Greece and in our modern West, to find some explanation of the origin of religion which should reduce it to some primitive habit of mind not itself now recognisable as religious. But the name of such theories is legion, and we must leave the greater number of them unmentioned. Some of them, indeed, are altogether too grotesque and ill-judged to deserve our serious notice. The Baron von Hügel even tells us how "one specially 'thorough' sage of this school discovers that religion began with, hence that it *is*, the scratching by a cow of an itch upon her back."[1] And here is what the protagonist of "Behaviourism" has to say:

> "To answer what the church means to men it is necessary to look upon the church as a stimulus and to find out what reactions are called out by this stimulus in a given race, in a given group, or in any given individual.

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[1] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, First Series, p. 141.

Parallel with this query we can carry out another as to why the church calls out such and such responses. This might take us into folk-lore and into the influence of the code upon the individual, into the influence of parents upon children, causing the race to project the father and mother into a heavenly state hereafter; finally into the realms of the incest complex, homosexual tendencies, and so on."[1]

A remarkable passage, certainly, but hardly for its wisdom! We find another writer arguing that "all religion in its beginning is a mere misinterpretation of sex ecstasy, and the religion of to-day is only the essentially unchanged evolutionary product of psycho-sexual perversion."[2] This, of course, is a Freudian view of the matter, and indeed we find Freud himself in one passage suggesting that present-day religion (or, as he calls it, superstition) is not so much a projection of our present-day wishes as a vestigial survival of primitive man's projections of *his* wishes—thus combining into one the wish-theory and the survival-theory of religion.[3]

Our criticism of all such theories of the origin of religion may now be summed up in the dictum that it is not possible intelligently to discuss the question of the racial origin of religion in abstraction from the inside acquaintance which we have with religion as it exists in our own souls and in our own societies today.[4] We have no other real key to the psychology of primitive human mentality than our knowledge of our own minds. Our best clue to the understanding of the rise of religious faith in the racial soul is our knowledge of how it arises in our own souls. The anthropologists have constantly deceived themselves in this regard. They have spoken as if the empirically ascertained data regarding our earliest human ancestors could form in themselves a sufficient basis for the most confident generalisations as to the provenance of the religious consciousness, and as if in this way new light could be thrown upon the nature of that consciousness. As a matter of fact, however, it would seem to be very largely the reverse which is true. The empirically ascertained data are in themselves exceedingly uncertain and obscure and are capable of the most various interpretations; and the most reasonable interpretation of them can only be that which succeeds in explaining them in the light of our soundest and broadest psychological insight into the nature of religion as we know it in our own lives. As one of the wisest of our anthropologists has himself said: "The last word in anthropology is: Know thyself."[1]

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[1] J. B. Watson, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist*, 2d ed., p. 355.

[2] Quoted by Selbie, *Psychology of Religion*, p. 11, from Schroeder, *Amer. Journ. of Rel. Psych.*, vol. VI.

[3] See *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Eng. transl., p. 310.

[4] The first chapter of Rauwenhoff's *Religionsphilosophie* excellently develops this point—"die Erklärung des Ursprungs der Religion durch unser eigenes religiöses Bewusstsein." (P. 26.) Religion, he urges, "konnte unmöglich aus etwas entstehen, worin das nicht lag, was sie allein zur Religion machen konnte." (P. 29.)

Those who have championed such theories of the origin of religion as we have here been considering have often tried to reconcile us to their very startling and apparently subversive nature by throwing to us as a sop the dictum that the ancient origin of religion has no bearing at all on its present value. This glib sophism has, however, been too often repeated. When we first read *Primitive Culture, The Principles of Sociology,* and *The Golden Bough,* we felt that our religion was being explained away. Then our teachers assured us that the question of origin and ultimate provenance was one thing, and the question of value and truth quite another; and for a time we believed them. Now we are wondering whether our first impression was not after all the truer one. If to say that religion originated in the fear of ghosts means anything less than that the deepest spring of our own present impulse to worship God is in essence but the dim survival of that ancient fear within our racial memory and tradition, then it is difficult to know what it can mean; and if it means that, it cannot but have a subversive, and indeed devastating, effect upon the religion of all who believe it to be true. We are therefore inclined to agree with Professor Gilbert Murray that if "Godwin destroyed Christianity as an artificial invention imposed for purposes of tyranny by corrupt priests in collusion with kings," "Frazer tends to destroy it by merely showing how old it is, how rooted in human nature and the *Urdummheit*";[2] and with Dr. Farnell that "the discovery of origins may exercise a momentous influence upon religious faith and even practice."[3] And there is one thing that at least gives us seriously to think, namely, that it is very difficult—perhaps impossible—to think of a case in which any such theory of the origin of religion as those we have here been considering has been put forward by a writer who himself professed any firm and deep and passionate conviction of the reality of God.

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[1] Marett, *Anthropology,* p. 30.

[2] In *The New Republic* for Feb. 28, 1923.

[3] Gifford Lectures on *The Attributes of God* (1925), p. 6. The pages which Dr. Farnell devoted to the discussion of this topic are among the most sensible that have hitherto been written concerning it.

CHAPTER II

THE RATIONALISTIC THEORY OF RELIGION

The View that Religion Consists
Essentially in Philosophical Speculatio

I

We must now turn to the consideration of a number of theories of religion which, because they seem to be based on more prolonged reflection and more sympathetic insight than those hitherto discussed, are deserving of a proportionately closer and more patient inspection on our part. And it is natural that we should begin, as the history of systematic reflection on the matter itself begins, with ~~the theory~~ which is typically associated with rationalism. ① Rationalism, as we have already seen, may be defined as the tendency, taking its rise among the earliest Greek philosophers, to assume that there exists no other avenue to reliable knowledge than the avenue of scientific investigation and speculation; and we may define the rationalistic theory of religion as the view which takes religious insight to be nothing but a more diffused and popular form of the same kind of insight which, since Thales and Pythagoras, has given rise to exact science and metaphysics.

As a matter of fact, however, this rationalistic theory of religion possesses much less intrinsic and historical importance than might at first sight be supposed, and that for a reason which we have already had occasion to note—namely, that nothing has been more characteristic of the rationalist's attitude towards religion than his tendency to concentrate not upon the question what religion is in itself or whence its insight is derived but rather upon the question as to how its most characteristic dicta can be proved or disproved. We may diligently search the pages of many a leading rationalistic writer upon religion without ever coming upon any discussion of the sources of the knowledge which religion already possesses, his whole interest being rather devoted to the comparison of that knowledge with the results at which science and metaphysics have now independently arrived. Indeed if we ever do succeed in surprising the rationalist in some hurried reflection upon the interior sources of religion's own insight into the truths of which he finds it in possession, he will as often as not (and this also we have already had occasion to remark) be found playing with one or other of the all-too-easy explanations that were before us in the foregoing chapter—and especially, perhaps, with the idea that the religion of the people of his own time is to be explained mainly as a traditional survival of some primitive habit of thought that has itself been long outgrown. But when, as happens only here and there during the long history of rationalistic theology, we do find a writer of prevailingly rationalistic tendencies devoting really serious consideration to the nature and sources of religion's own insight, it is almost always to what we have called the rationalistic theory that he will be discovered in the end to have resort.

With what is by far the most significant and historically influential part of the rationalistic treatment of religion—its attempt to prove or disprove the truth of religion's leading utterances—we have already dealt at length; with its less important view as to what religion in itself is and whence its own native insight into things is derived, we may now deal somewhat more briefly.

What the rationalist would say to us is something like this. There is only way of knowledge by which any reliable light can be had about the universe in which we live, its nature and meaning and purpose, and our relation to it and place and function in it. It is a way of knowledge which man has to some extent trodden from the beginning and which we all of us still tread in our haphazard and half-hearted way, but which reaches its crown and completion only in exact science and scientific philosophy. What this way of knowledge is any text-book of logic (which is simply the theory of scientific method) will inform you: it consists in the systematic observation of facts and in using the law of cause and effect to make deductions from the facts thus observed. It is only, so our rationalist will go on to tell us, since the time of the Greeks, since the time of Thales and Pythagoras, Aristotle and Epicurus, Archimedes and Eudoxus and Ptolemy, that the possibilities of this way of knowledge have been explored in anything like a determined, systematic, and self-critical way, and consequently it is only since the time of the Greeks that we have had anything worthy of the name of science (which is to say knowledge) or philosophy (which is to say wisdom). But long before this earliest birth of science and philosophy in the proper sense, and indeed as far back as history can carry us, we find men forming for themselves certain crude pre-scientific thought-constructions concerning the nature and meaning of the universe and their own place in it; and to this day we find similar thought-constructions everywhere current both among those races to whom exact science and philosophy have not yet brought their enlightenment and among all those of ourselves who have not yet fully availed ourselves of such enlightenment. Now, we shall be told in conclusion, these primitive and popular thought-constructions are just what are known to us as the various religious systems of the world. On this view, therefore, there is no ultimate distinction between religious faith on the one hand and scientifico-philosophical speculation concerning the nature of things on the other. The traditional religious systems are nothing else than primitive and popular philosophies; while to the modern *illuminé* there can be no other religion than that which is provided him by his own more enlightened philosophical inquiries.

Although, as has been said, it is only by an occasional thinker that we find this view of the nature of religion deliberately and frankly dwelt upon or worked out with any fulness of detail, yet it is well-nigh impossible to exaggerate the extent to which it has formed the half-suppressed background of the thought of students of metaphysical philosophy both in ancient Greece and in our modern world since the Baconian and Cartesian period. It is true that in the Middle Ages another view was almost universally taken, it being held that beyond and above the investigations of science and philosophy there was another and higher and altogether different way of knowledge—the way of faith. But even in the Middle Ages the purely rationalistic reading of religion did not go quite unrepresented, for it was ardently championed by the Islamic scholar Averroes. According to Averroes the highest form of knowledge is not faith but what he calls the "demonstrative speculation" of exact philosophy. The form of knowledge which is peculiar to religion is not higher than this, but lower, and is merely that of "parable and likeness." That is to say, the religion of the people is nothing but elementary philosophic knowledge in figurative and parabolic form.[1] But with this popular religion the philosopher can dispense; because, as he held, "the peculiar religion of the philosopher consisted in the deepening of his knowledge; for man could offer to God no worthier cultus than that of the knowledge of his works, through which we attain to the knowledge of God himself in the fulness of his essence."[2] This view we have already found reappearing, practically unchanged, in such a seventeenth-century thinker as Spinoza.

In our own day there is probably no attitude to religion which is more widely represented among professional metaphysicians than this one which makes religion and metaphysics to be one and the same thing and accordingly leaves the metaphysician with no other religion than that which he can extract from his metaphysics. One of the most notable recent defences of it is that of Benedetto Croce. According to this distinguished writer, religion is but another name for mythology and is accordingly nothing else than a more primitive embodiment of that same activity of thought which, since Thales, has appeared in the world in the altogether higher and more enlightened form of exact philosophy. The real distinction is not, he urges, between religion and philosophy, but between false philosophy and true philosophy; and as it must clearly be the duty of a false philosophy to give way before a truer one, so it must be the duty of what we now call religion to allow itself to "dissolve into philosophy." In his own words:

> "Since, then, religion is identical with myth, and since myth is not distinguishable from philosophy by any positive character, but only as false philosophy from true philosophy and as error from the truth which rectifies and contains it, we must affirm that religion, in so far as it is truth, is identical with philosophy, or as can also be said, that *philosophy* is the *true religion.* All ancient and modern thought about religions, which have always been dissolved into philosophies, leads to this result. . . .
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> "When religion does not dissolve into philosophy and wishes to persist together with it, or to substitute itself for philosophy, it reveals itself as effective error; that is to say, as an arbitrary attempt against truth, due to

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[1] Averroes, *Philosophy and Theology*, as translated by S. Nirenstein in the appendix to his thesis, *The Problem of the Existence of God in Maimonides, Alanus, and Averroes* (Philadelphia, 1924).

[2] Ueberweg, *Hist. of Phil.*, Eng. transl., vol. I, p. 417.

habit, feelings, and individual passions. But the destiny of every form of error is to be unable to persist before the light of truth."[1]

II

Criticism of this view.

What then are we to say of this view of religion? Is religious faith really the same thing as metaphysical speculation? Were Thales and Pythagoras and Democritus in *their* way, and Jeremiah and Jesus and Paul in *their* way, trying to do the same thing, to answer the same questions, and satisfy the same needs of the human spirit? Were they drawing upon what were fundamentally the same sources of insight into the deep nature of things? And are we therefore faced with the problem of choosing between the two forms in which the one thing has thus expressed itself?

During the last century and a half or thereabouts we have had not a few among us who were ready to answer that this rationalistic view of religion has no element of truth in it at all. We find, for instance, Matthew Arnold declaring that "if there be anything with which metaphysics have nothing to do . . . it is religion"[2]; or we find a modern psychologist of some note asking "What has the 'speculative faculty' to do with religion?" and answering "Nothing at all."[3] And from such leaders of modern theological thought as Kant, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl quotations of similar import might very easily be made; philosophy and religion, they would say to us, are things wholly separate from one another. We ourselves are likely to feel, however, that a theory which has found so firm a footing in the history of thought as the rationalistic theory has done can hardly be without some important elements of truth. Let us therefore begin our examination by asking what true elements of insight can really be discerned behind the tendency to identify religion with speculative philosophy.

A

(1) In the first place, there is undoubtedly a real sense in which the function which science and metaphysics now discharge for us modern Westerners was in earlier days discharged, and among less scientifically minded peoples is to this day discharged, under the

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[1] *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept*, Eng. transl., pp. 444–446.

[2] *Literature and Dogma*, ch. I.

[3] J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion*, pp. 89–90.

ægis and direction of religion. Every one of the traditional religions not only contains a cosmology but contains what was, at the time when it was first formed, the whole sum of available cosmological knowledge. In that sense, then, religion is actually the mother of philosophy. Only it is to be noted that it is equally the mother of well-nigh everything else. It is the mother of medicine, the mother of politics, the mother of law, the mother of art in all its forms—of sculpture and architecture, of music and dancing, of poetry and of letters. In all primitive societies the whole of life is centred in religion. The priest is not only man of God, he is also medicine-man, law-giver, scholar, educator, and even king. It is therefore impossible to argue, as does a writer like Croce, that because in olden time a man's cosmology and metaphysics came to him in the name of religion, religion is therefore not now to be distinguished by us from cosmology and metaphysics; for the same argument would prove also that religion cannot be distinguished from medicine, politics, art, and many other things. A better way to face the problem is to ask whether, when all those particular spiritual activities which we now call by other names (morality, law, politics, pedagogy, art, letters, science, metaphysics) have been granted leave to develop themselves in their own way and in relative abstraction from one another and from their ancient foster-mother, there is not still left to religion a kind of kernel of her old self which she now recognises to her only real self and to be a thing which she must never delegate to any of her upstart brood.[1]

(2) Yet we must in the second place recognise that even after scientific philosophy has made good its distinctness from religion, it still retains the likeness of its foster-parent in one important respect. Religion and metaphysics have at least this in common—that they both in some sort claim to give us knowledge concerning the ultimate nature and meaning of the universe as a whole or, in the German phrase, to give us a *Weltanschauung*. This being so, we are almost bound to conclude that they bear some direct relation to one another. On the other hand, it by no means follows that, as the rationalists have sup-

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[1] Croce's attempt to refute the view that religion "is something *sui generis*, or that it is not exhausted in the myth" (*op. cit.*, pp. 443–444), is of the most perfunctory nature that could well be imagined.

posed, the two are conterminous, or that the relationship between them is one of sheer dependence on the part of religion. It may be, on the contrary, that the dependence of one on the other is only partial and that, so far as it exists, it is the other way about; in other words, it may be that the insight into the nature and meaning of things which religion possesses is not drawn by it from scientific metaphysics but is rather one (and perhaps the most important) of the several sources on which scientific metaphysics is itself obliged to draw in its attempt to reach a synoptic view of reality as a whole. And this, in fact, is the alternative which we shall presently find reason to adopt. X

Having then to this extent recognised true elements of insight behind the rationalistic identification of religion with philosophical speculation, let us now consider the evidence that can be marshalled on the other side. Part of this evidence has already been put forward during our earlier criticism of the rationalistic *apologetic*, and part of it must wait until we come to the positive statement of what we believe to be a truer view—there being no other effective way of making clear what religion is *not* than by exhibiting what it *is* in the clearest possible light. Here, therefore, we can do no more than very summarily suggest a number of considerations that seem to militate against the rationalist's conclusion. B

(1) In the first place, it must be pointed out that although religion and metaphysics certainly do seem to have some ground in common, there is also some ground covered by metaphysics with which religion seems to have no concern. If we consult any current text-book of metaphysics, we shall be forced to admit that a large number of the questions dealt with, and perhaps even a majority of them, are of no interest to religion whatsoever. They have no bearing at all on the soul's life with God, such life remaining essentially unaffected by the conclusions at which we arrive concerning them. Now it is of course true that this distinction between those questions about the nature and constitution of things which it is vital for religion to be able to answer and those which are (if we may so phrase it) religiously indifferent was not present to the minds of men in the earlier stages of the religious development of the race; and there is accordingly hardly any scientific or metaphysical issue on which

it is not possible to find explicit or implicit deliverances in the ancient sacred books. But since science and philosophy have come into the world, religion has seemed to become progressively clearer in its mind as to precisely what kind of question it must continue to make matter of its own concern, and what kind of question it safely can, and of necessity must, leave to science to deal with by its own *lumen siccum*. We may still be very far from having attained to a finally satisfactory fixation of this line of division, yet there is probably no part of our latter-day religious heritage that is more precious to us than just this one. There is no modern insight to which we should be inclined to cling more jealously than the realisation that many of the speculative and cosmological issues concerning which the old theologies made bold to instruct us, and the old creeds to compel us, belong to regions with which religious faith has no direct concern and in which she has no direct competence. If, therefore, religion's interest in the ultimate nature and constitution of things is felt by us to be more restricted in range than that of metaphysics, it follows that religion and metaphysics are not, at the heart of them, the same thing.

(2) But there is also an important respect in which religion is not narrower but wider than metaphysics; that is to say, not only is there much ground which is covered by metaphysics and not covered by religion, but there is also much ground which is covered by religion and not covered by metaphysics. As was pointed out by Schleiermacher a century and a quarter ago, if religion and philosophy were really one and the same thing, then it would have to follow that "religion could be acquired by study—a thing not hitherto asserted," and that the more metaphysical knowledge a man had the more religious must he be held to be.[1] The truth is, however, that nobody would think of calling a man religious in virtue of the extent of his metaphysical knowledge. It is indeed true that we should hesitate to call a man religious who was wholly without knowledge and assurance with regard to the nature and meaning of the universe, but it is still more obvious that we should not call a man religious if, in addition to such knowledge, he did not also manifest some impulse to worship, to pray, to praise, and to serve. However cer-

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[1] *Reden*, transl. Oman, p. 102.

tain it is, therefore, that religion implies a *Weltanschauung*, it is also clear that *Weltanschauung*, taken by itself, is not religion.

(3) Moreover it is in the third place to be noted that it is only some *Weltanschauungen* which could even be supposed to have a *place* in religion. If it were in any sense true that the essence of religion consisted in philosophising, then it would follow that all philosophies were as such religious. We should all grant, however, that while some systems of philosophy may justly be called religious, there are other systems which are definitely irreligious, opposed to religion. Hence it is impossible to believe that religion and philosophy can be the same thing.

We may sum up the three points so far noted by saying that religion and metaphysics, instead of being conterminous, seem rather to be like two circles which have some part of their area in common but are nevertheless eccentric. Metaphysics, it is clear, centres in knowledge of the nature of things, while religion as clearly has its centre somewhere else.

(4) Where the centre of religion actually lies may become somewhat clearer to us if we notice a fourth respect in which religion seems to differ from metaphysics, namely, that while disciplined academic learning and the pursuance of strict scientific method undoubtedly count for a very great deal in the study of metaphysics, we cannot help feeling that religion is a thing for simple men. We feel indeed that as regards the kind of knowledge and assurance for which religion characteristically stands, the trained and learned philosopher has no advantage at all over the most unlettered of the saints. Here is a region in which the Stagirite scholar has no other organ of vision than that which is equally in the possession of the Galilean peasant. Here is a region in which pre-eminence follows not upon the possession of a more perfect scientific method but upon the possession of a purer and a simpler heart.

But it is clear that although, for our religion, we are every whit as likely to go to the unlearned saint as to the most accomplished and scientifically minded metaphysician—and do in fact go to Jesus Christ rather than to Aristotle, yet there *is* a kind of knowledge which we can get in greater perfection from Aristotle than we can from Jesus Christ; and it is clear that this kind of knowledge is what we mean by metaphysics. We shall, in fact, never be able to persuade men that our Lord and St. Paul were as accomplished and perspicacious *metaphysicians* as Democritus and Aristotle, Hume and Locke, Mr. Bradley and Mr. Russell. If therefore we allow the view to pass unchallenged that religion and metaphysics are at bottom the same thing and that Jesus and Paul were in their religion attempting to do nothing different from what the philosophers are doing in their philosophy, the conclusion will almost inevitably be drawn that the philosophers are doing it better; and so philosophy will simply supplant religion in the sense which Croce so clearly indicates. The displacement of religion by scientific metaphysics is the only logical result of the rationalistic position and, as a matter of fact, it is the result at which the large majority of those holding that position have in their own hearts arrived.

(5) Finally, we shall here mention, though we must leave it to a future chapter to dwell upon, two further positive characters of religion which serve not only to differentiate it from speculative philosophy but also to determine where its own real centre lies. The first of these is the notably *practical* nature of the religious interest as over against the philosophical. This does not mean that philosophy has no practical interest; for that would be to say that it had no interest at all, seeing that in the last analysis, as Kant says, "all interest is practical." Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that in philosophy we seem to be in the first place concerned with the intellectual desire to understand, whereas in religion we are much rather concerned with the practical desire to find a firm foundation on which to build our lives. The reason why we feel that so many philosophical issues are of no concern to religion is just that they seem to have no direct bearing on the actual business of life. "The results from my various questions as bearing upon the value of God," says Professor Pratt, speaking of a questionnaire which he had issued, "would, therefore, seem to point all one way. God is valued not as an explanation of things and an assistance to the understanding but rather as an immediate help to the practical and emotional life."[1] And we may take this from Auguste Sabatier:

> "There is this amount of truth in the ancient hypothesis that religion arose out of fear; namely, that it places us on the practical arena of life,

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[1] *Psychology of Religious Belief*, p. 278. *Cf.* also what is said on p. 217.

and not in the theoretical region of science. The question man puts to himself in religion is always a question of salvation, and if he seems sometimes to be pursuing in it the enigma of the universe, it is only that he may solve the enigma of his life."[1]

Very closely connected with this practical character of religion is the other character which here falls to be mentioned—namely, the *sense of obligation* which seems to attach to religious belief in contradistinction from philosophical knowledge. Of the faith of which religion discourses it has been said that,

"To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

But there is nothing, on the other hand, to which scientific philosophy feels so much obliged to cling as to its complete freedom of inquiry. Here then is another point of difference between religion and philosophy—that we think it right to put forward in the name of religion only those beliefs about the nature of things which it would in some real sense be disloyal and shameful to doubt.

We may sum up our criticism as follows. Philosophy is undoubtedly the foster-daughter of religion; and religion undoubtedly does hold within itself a certain knowledge of the ultimate nature of things which any fully synoptic philosophy must use as one of its sources of insight. But religion is nevertheless something quite characteristically different from what we mean by philosophical speculation.

Religious Faith Not Based on the
Contemplation of Nature.

III

The rationalistic reading of religion as being nothing more than primitive cosmology has, however, frequently found further sustenance in the notion that it was precisely as a quasi-scientific hypothesis to explain the facts of the natural world that religion first made its appearance in the mind of man. If this were actually the case, then certainly it would be our duty altogether to abandon the ancient faiths of man and to place our sole reliance upon modern scientific cosmological research; for there can be no reasonable doubt that the facts of the natural world are better understood by the modern investigator than they were by the ancient prophet and apostle. Indeed the only trouble is to understand how, if this view of its meaning be the true one, religion did not die out long ago. As Durkheim says:

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[1] *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 13. I have here compressed several of Sabatier's sentences into one.

> "That men have an interest in knowing the world which surrounds them, and consequently that their reflection should have been applied to it at an early date, is something that every one will readily admit. . . . But if . . . it is of these reflections that religious thought was born, it is impossible to explain how it was able to survive the first attempts made, and the persistence with which it has maintained itself becomes unintelligible. . . . Whatever we may do, if religion has as its principal object the expression of the forces of nature, it is impossible to see in it anything more than a system of lying fictions, whose survival is incomprehensible."[1]

Perhaps, however, enough was said at an earlier point in our discussion to demonstrate the wrong-headedness of any such notion. As long ago as the seventeenth century we found Pascal exclaiming "how remarkable it is that no biblical author makes use of nature in order to prove God";[2] and a century later we find Hume urging upon his generation that "the first ideas of religion arose not from a contemplation of the works of nature but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human mind."[3] The truth is, as we have already said, that the assurance of God is much more an assurance with which we, as spiritual beings, face the facts of nature than it is an assurance which we derive from the contemplation of these facts. Religion does indeed offer us its own interpretation of the natural order of things, but the interpretation it offers is not of the order of a scientific explanation; that is to say, it does not claim, like the explanations of science, to be the *simplest* interpretation or to be in any ordinary sense an impartial one. Its faith is not a hypothesis, but a sacred trust. What it manifests is not the humble and empirically minded acceptance by the human mind of nature's appearances, but rather the self-assertion of the human spirit over against nature. And it is this very self-assertion which expresses itself, in the later stretches of history, in that conflict between religion and natural science with which we were concerned in the foregoing chapter. To the rationalist the conflict appears merely as an unequal struggle between an old and dead cosmology and a new and living one; but in truth it is rather the modern counterpart of a struggle which was every whit as familiar to our rude forefathers as it is to our most enlightened selves—the struggle between inward faith and apparent outward fact. It is precisely this truth which Feuerbach and Freud have tried to express by saying that religion is a *projection* upon the face of nature of certain elements in our own spiritual natures, our only quarrel with them being in regard to the particular account they give of the spiritual elements that are thus projected. And the whole matter has been well summed up by one who, as we hinted before, was not entirely uninfluenced by Feuerbach—Albrecht Ritschl:

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[1] E. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, Eng. transl., pp. 79–81.

[2] *Pensées*, 243.

[3] *Natural History of Religion* (ed. Green and Grose), p. 315.

> "In every religion what is sought, with the help of the superhuman spiritual power reverenced by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. . . . Consequently no proof of God's existence starts properly save that which accepts as given man's self-distinction from nature, and his endeavours to maintain himself against it or over it."[1]

Religious Faith not a product of the animistic Outlook.

IV

Special attention must, however, be devoted to one quarter in particular from which, during the last half-century, support has seemed to come to the rationalistic reading of religion—namely, the supposedly decisive palæanthropological evidence that religion was originally *a product of the animistic outlook.*

This view was put forward by E. B. Tylor in his great work on *Primitive Culture*. According to Tylor, there prevails among all peoples, in the most primitive stage of cultural evolution to which it is possible for us to penetrate, the tendency (for which he coined the name of animism) to explain the various phenomena of nature by supposing the presence behind them of souls or spirits like the souls or spirits that are in men. It is natural, however, that once such superhuman spirits are believed to exist, some effort should be made to induce them to exercise their uncanny powers to man's benefit rather than, as might otherwise be the case, to his disadvantage and destruction. Resort is accordingly had to flattery and bribery, to prayer and praise, to sacrifice and offering. Thus do the spirits become gods, and thus do religious worship and communion come into being.

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[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. III, Eng. transl., pp. 199, 219. The same point is again and again insisted on by Schweitzer in his little book *Christianity and the Religions of the World*. "Religion," he says on page 66, "is not a knowledge of the divine which springs from the contemplation of the universe."

Now of the several generalisations which are contained in this construction there are two which have never been very seriously questioned since Tylor wrote: first, that at a certain very early stage in its cultural development the animistic habit of thought seems to be universal in the race and to dominate its whole outlook; and, secondly, that from that stage onward animism and religion seem to go hand in hand and to make common cause with one another. Matters have, however, gone very differently with Tylor's remaining generalisation, namely, that it is out of the animistic outlook that religion itself directly arises. So far is this from being now a matter of general agreement among anthropologists that it is, on the contrary, a favourite butt for their criticism. They point out, in the first place, that the animistic outlook on the world, taken strictly by itself, has no religious quality at all, and that it only becomes possible to think of it as arousing a genuinely religious response in man's mind when we suppose him to have been already, and quite independently, in possession of some religious impulse. They point out furthermore that, however universal the animistic tendency of thought may be among men who have reached a certain stage of culture, there is yet reason to distinguish a still earlier and more primitive cast of mind for which the conception of personalised spirits has not yet developed; and they claim that to this stage in the evolution of general culture there corresponds also a characteristic stage in the development of religion. We have consequently heard much of recent years, and that from the very foremost special students of the subject—such as Marett, Wundt, Söderblom, and Durkheim[1]—of a definitely *preanimistic* stadium in religion's development. It is indeed granted by all these scholars that not until the fully animistic level is reached can men conceive of the existence of gods in the full personal sense and that, as Söderblom puts it, "animism does for faith in God exactly what it does for the conception of human nature—it enables deity to be regarded as will and individual personality."[1] But that, it is held, is no reason why at an earlier stage there should not be religious manifestations of another kind in which superhuman spirits play no part at all; and as a matter of fact it is now very generally agreed that we have not a few examples of such 'godless' religions still existing in the world; as, for example, the cults of the Australian bushmen which have been very thoroughly investigated by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, and later by Strehlow.

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[1] *Cf.* R. R. Marett, "Preanimistic Religion," in *The Threshold of Religion;* Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, vol. II; N. Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens* (1915), ch. II; E. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, book I, chs. II and IV.

There is, moreover, one fact about all these departures from Tylor's position which, though it has received far too little notice, is yet of the very greatest significance for our present argument—namely, that, in reality, they have all of them resulted not from the emergence of any new palæanthropological data but rather from a sounder general understanding as to what religion, as we know it in our own hearts and lives, actually and essentially is. The real reason why we are not now able with Tylor to look upon religious faith as a by-product of the animistic habit of thought is simply that we can no longer feel, as Tylor was able to do, that belief in the existence of superhuman spirits constitutes the true inmost core of the religious consciousness. It is indeed true that since Tylor's day many new facts have come to light (or at least have come to be more clearly and confidently understood) with reference to some primitive peoples in whose outlook spirits play but a small part and gods, apparently, no part at all. But, *if we had not meanwhile revised our working conception of what religion essentially is*, the natural inference to draw from these facts would have been not that the religion of these peoples is of a non-animistic variety but rather that these peoples are entirely without religion of any kind. The fact that it is the other conclusion which has actually been drawn is a most significant commentary on the nature of the whole inquiry.

A good illustration of this point may be seen in the case of Söderblom. "The Australians," he remarks, "worship no spirits and no gods." He then quotes from Messrs. Spencer and Gillen a description of an Australian initiation ceremony, "leaving it," as he says, "to the reader to decide whether what is described is religion or not"; and when he has finished quoting, he contents himself with asking merely, "Can anybody read this passage without feeling that in it we have somehow to do with the Australians' religion?"[1] In other words, it is taken for granted that the only final appeal is to our own inward knowledge of what religion really is.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

We begin to see, then, that the rationalistic conception of the essential nature of religion cannot logically appeal for support to the animistic theory of religion's origin, for the simple reason that it is itself the real starting-point from which that theory sets out. We have already pointed out that though inquiries into the religion of our remotest ancestors are often nowadays held to shed light upon the nature of the hold which religion has over our own souls to-day, the real illumination must almost always be the other way about, our interpretation of the scanty objective data concerning primitive human mentality being very largely dependent upon our introspective knowledge of our own spiritual natures; and this is a case in point. Our conclusion must consequently be that animism itself is in no wise a specifically religious attitude of mind, but is simply man's first crude system of natural philosophy; and that, though religion showed herself as ready to combine with animism and to use it as a framework for her thinking as she has since shown herself ready to combine with and to make use of more scientific cosmologies, her own centre of gravity is to be looked for in a very different quarter.[2]

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[1] *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, pp. 194–195.

[2] "Animism," says Höffding, "is a conception of the world, and is not, in and for itself, a religion. But it is interesting to the philosophy of religion, because it is the most elementary world-conception . . . which religion has pressed into her service." (*Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 137.) "It is the earliest system of natural philosophy," says Pringle-Pattison. (*Idea of Immortality*, p. 7.) "Der Animismus," so Rauwenhoff (*Religionsphilosophie*, p. 38) quotes Tiele as saying, "ist nicht selbst eine Religion, sondern eine Art primitiver Philosophie, die nicht allein die Religion, sondern das ganze Leben der Naturmenschen beherrscht." And what Rauwenhoff himself adds is worth reading. "If man," says Jastrow, "was without religion before the animistic theory presented itself to his mind, animism by itself would not have led to the rise of religion." (*Study of Religion*, p. 183.)

The Hegelian Theory of Religion.

V

In treating of the rationalistic identification of religion with metaphysical speculation we have so far made no mention of a name which may seem to many to be the most important of all in this connection—the name of Hegel. This defect must now be made good. Was Hegel really a rationalist? And did he, no less than Croce, regard religion as merely a primitive, and so far unsatisfactory, attempt to do what philosophy afterwards does more perfectly? It is precisely because the answer to these questions is not so entirely clear as might be desired (and is to some extent involved in controversy) that we have thought it well to put it rather at the end than at the beginning of this chapter's discussion.

It must be admitted that Hegel himself would have been very much scandalised at being called a rationalist (though perhaps he would not have so much objected to the nearly allied epithets of intellectualist and panlogist); for he always looked upon himself as being the declared enemy of what, with special reference to Wolf and his school, he called "*der alte Rationalismus.*" It must also be admitted that the influence of Hegel has been genuinely potent in the critical demolition and final disappearance from our midst of not a few of the absurdities of this older rationalism. The Hegelian *Religionsphilosophie* has contributed a full share of the nails by the help of which the "natural theology" of an earlier day has been at last made so secure in its coffin. On the other hand, to such of his contemporaries as Schleiermacher and Schopenhauer, and to such later writers as Ritschl and Herrmann on the one hand and William James and Bergson on the other, Hegel appears as the most thoroughgoing rationalist of all; and while none of these writers can be regarded as entirely fair and sympathetic in their criticism of him, it seems impossible to believe that they are without fundamental justification.

Let us then consider what Hegel has to say concerning the relation of religion to philosophy.

First, as to the sources of philosophic insight. At the centre of Hegel's philosophy lies the belief that all reality forms a single spiritual organism. The one ultimate being, he believes, is Absolute Spirit. What may be called the skeleton structure of this Absolute Spirit is to be found in logic—in the kind of logic represented by Kant's system of categories and especially in the great formula or principle which Hegel himself holds to be central to such logic, the Triadic Synthesis of being, not-being, and being-for-self; but in order to a knowledge of the filling of it we must bring this logic to bear upon the various departments of our experience, such as sense-experience, morality, and art. To Hegel these departments of experience are just so many 'spheres of the Absolute,' that is to say, so many different regions in which the Absolute realises itself and in which its characteristic structure is to be recognised. Philosophic knowledge or knowledge of the Absolute is thus to be attained, *first* through a purely deductive study of logic, and *then* through a study of the various departments of experience with a view to the recognition in them of a concrete embodiment of the principles which logic has already presented to us in abstract form.[1]

And now what of religion? Is it a special sphere of the Absolute like morality or art? Hegel's answer is that it is not, but is rather comparable to philosophy itself in that it is concerned with the Absolute as such. The fact is, he explains, that religion and philosophy deal with an identical object, but differ in the form in which the knowledge of that object is presented. Religion gives us only *Vorstellungen* of the ultimate reality, that is, imaginative representations; but philosophy gives us *Begriffe*, exact and adequate concepts or notions. Chronologically, religion of course comes first, imaginative representation always preceding philosophic conception. "In point of time, the mind makes general *images* of objects, long before it makes *notions* of them."[2] But philosophy, when it does come, gives us a knowledge that is in all ways more adequate to the nature of the Object known.

In a general way this may seem to be clear enough. Religion, we understand, is but a first intuitive and imaginative realisation of the truths which Absolute Idealism afterwards discloses to us in the severer and more rigorous thought-forms of metaphysics. Everything, however, depends on the further definition of the distinction that is here implied. What exactly is the *Vorstellung* and what exactly is its relation to the *Begriff?*

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[1] One of the most faithful of Hegel's English followers, the late Dr. J. M. E. McTaggart, has thus briefly described his own philosophical method: "I have divided my system into two parts. The first admits only two empirical premises—'something exists' and 'what exists is differentiated.' In the second part the results obtained in the first part will be applied to these general characteristics which empirical observation tells us are, or appear to be, true of the various parts of the existent."—*Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. Muirhead, first series, p. 252.

[2] *Logic* (tr. Wallace), p. 1.

There is no doubt that Hegel's answer to these questions is confused and wavering. In particular he seems unable to make up his mind clearly as to whether the characteristic quality of the *Vorstellung* lies in its relation to *feeling* or in its relation to *picture-thinking*. To accept the former view would, of course, be to embrace the romanticist theory of religion with which we shall have to concern ourselves in our next chapter, and to make the *differentia* of religion to consist in the element of feeling it contains; and in view of Hegel's professed hatred of romanticism and of his philosophical hostility to its greatest exponent, Schleiermacher, it may seem strange to attribute to him any leanings in that direction. Nevertheless it is certain that he had such leanings; and "faith or feeling" is a phrase that not infrequently escaped his pen. He protests vigorously enough against the extremer forms of the distinction here implied. The real distinction, he insists, is not between thought as such and feeling as such:

> "These doctrines would put thought and feeling so far apart as to make them opposites, and would represent them as so antagonistic that feeling, particularly religious feeling, is supposed to be contaminated, perverted, and even annihilated by thought. They also emphatically hold that religion and piety must grow out of, and rest upon, something very different from thought. But those who make this separation forget meanwhile that only man has capacity for religion, and that animals no more have religion than they have law and morality."[1]

Yet, as he argues, they cannot but recognise that it is nothing but "thought which marks the man off from the animals."[2] The real distinction is thus rather between pure thought on the one hand and "thinking under the guise of feeling" or, conversely expressed, "feelings that have been moulded and permeated by thought" on the other. While, therefore, the *Vorstellung* of religion is undoubtedly a kind of thinking, its peculiar characteristic is that it is affective or emotional thinking. For the benefit of those who may find it strange that two such opposite tendencies as rationalism and romanticism should here be conjoined in a single thinker, we may quote the following passage from a writer whose historical generalisations we have already on more than one occasion found to be valuable:

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

> "No one accustomed to the study of ideas will be surprised to discover that at the root of these two opposite extremes of Rationalism and what we may call, for want of a better name, Sentimentalism, there lies the *same* mistake. Both decline to enter upon the task of attempting to *understand* religion *from within*; that is, Rationalism as well as Sentimentalism refuses to reason its full rights. . . . Like Sentimentalism, then, Rationalism denies the intelligible or rational character of religious experience. Thus Rationalism and Sentimentalism are found in history in close contiguity."[1]

At other times, however, the *Vorstellung* is represented by Hegel, not as an emotional, but rather as a pictorial, representation of its object; and it is probable that it is this way of looking at the matter which means most for Hegel's own thinking, as it is certainly closer to the etymological significance of the word. The *Vorstellung* is now held to grasp its object by means of generalised images, thus differing from the *Anschauung* of æsthetic art, which deals in particularised images. It is however pointed out by Hegel that "picture-thinking" must of necessity be also "materialised thinking"; for it is only of material things that we can have images. Hence to think of immaterial things by means of *Vorstellungen* is to think of them in material terms or (as it has been well expressed by one of Hegel's followers) to envisage the things of one world in terms of another.

Sometimes Hegel conjoins in a single sentence these two ways of differentiating the *Vorstellung* of religion from the *Begriff* of philosophy. A good example is a passage in the *Philosophy of Right* where he sums up the whole matter as follows:

> "The Universal Spirit exists concretely in art in the form of perception and image, in religion in the form of feeling and pictorial imaginative thinking, and in philosophy in the form of pure free thought."[2]

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[1] C. C. J. Webb, *Problems in the Relation of God and Man*, pp. 72–73. It is not suggested that Mr. Webb would approve our application of this passage to Hegel's case.

[2] Dyde's transl., p. 431.

Our next question must be as to the relative value of the two forms of knowledge of the Absolute, the *Vorstellung* and the *Begriff,* religion and philosophy. And here again there are two sides to Hegel's thought and two positions between which he seems to waver. On the one hand he seems to allow not only that religion was the first to occupy the common field, but also that, to the end, it is religion that must be the creative and forward-moving force. It is always popular religion, he would seem to say, and not academic philosophy, that must break new ground, the duty of philosophy being rather to set in order the ground already broken. The function of philosophy, in other words, is interpretative rather than creative, and interpretation can never "catch up" with creation. There is, for instance, the celebrated passage in the *Philosophy of Right:*

> "Only one word more concerning the desire to teach the world what it ought to be. For such a purpose philosophy at least always comes too late. Philosophy, as the thought of the world, does not appear until reality has completed its formative process and made itself ready. . . . When philosophy paints its grey in grey, one form of life has become old, and by means of grey it cannot be rejuvenated. The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering."[1]

In the *Philosophy of Religion* he expresses himself no less plainly:

> "It is not the concern of philosophy to produce religion in any individual. Its existence is, on the contrary, presupposed as forming what is fundamental in every one. So far as man's essential nature is concerned, nothing new is to be introduced into him. To try to do this would be as absurd as to give a dog printed writings to chew, under the idea that in this way you could put mind into it. He who has not extended his spiritual interests beyond the hurry and bustle of this finite world, nor succeeded in lifting himself above this life through aspiration, through the anticipation, through the feeling of the Eternal, and who has not yet gazed upon the pure ether of the soul, does not possess in himself that element which it is our object here to comprehend."[2]

Again, in the opening pages of the smaller *Logic* we find him pouring scorn on the idea that only philosophy can give us assurance of God's reality and urging that "such a doctrine would find its parallel if we said that eating was impossible before we had acquired a knowledge of the chemical, botanical, and zoological qualities of our food, and that we must delay digestion till we had finished the study of anatomy and physiology."[1] If all that is here said be taken in earnest, then it is to the *Vorstellungen* of religion that we must still continue to look for the living and growing substance of our knowledge of God, and philosophy can do no more than systematise, and to that extent clarify, what is already in our secure possession.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

[2] *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., vol. I, p. 4.

There is, however, another and very different side to Hegel's thought about the relationship of philosophy to religion, and it is a side which, as we cannot help feeling, exercises an influence on his general outlook which is incommensurate with the extent to which he allows himself to give expression to it. For it is difficult to escape the impression that it is from philosophy rather than from religion that Hegel himself prefers to draw his own spiritual nourishment. Many and sincere as are the tributes he pays to historical religion and to the "ordinary thought" (as he calls it) of which it is a fruit, we still feel that these have lost their power to satisfy himself, and that in his own mind philosophy has in a real sense taken their place. As we might venture to put it, the light by which Hegel himself lives is not so much Christianity as Absolute Idealism. As one historian has remarked of his system: "In the last issue we come upon a great formula, and when that absolute truth is found, religion is not only satisfied but surpassed."[2] And indeed Hegel is often quite frank in admitting that the form under which religion grasps reality is a form that is less adequate to the true nature of reality than is the form under which philosophy grasps it; and that accordingly religious faith, though indeed it provided the initial stimulation, can nevertheless not provide the final goal of the philosopher's spiritual pilgrimage. Religion as such can never *satisfy* the philosopher's own soul. We read in one place:

> "Although many a great and richly endowed nature, and many a profound intelligence, has found satisfaction in religious truth, yet it is the Notion, this inherently concrete thought, that is not yet satisfied."[3]

But, as has been said, it is on the whole not so much in explicit statements as in the general spirit of Hegel's writing, and between the lines of it, that we find this side of his thought expressed. In general there is certainly left upon us the impression that it is in philosophy and not in religion that the Spirit of Man reaches the climax of its development. And it is, of course, just here that, in spite of the real resemblance which we noted, the final outcome of Hegel's teaching is diametrically opposed to that of Schleiermacher, so that we cannot doubt that their propounders were fundamentally right in regarding one another with philosophic hostility. Both alike agree in holding philosophy to be a product of pure thought and religion to be somehow a matter of feeling; but Schleiermacher places his final reliance on the latter, while Hegel places his on the former.[1]

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[1] *Logic*, Eng. transl., pp. 3–4.

[2] J. Oman, *The Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries*, p. 252.

[3] *Phil. of Rel.*, Eng. transl., vol. I, p. 154.

The best commentary on this ambiguity in Hegel's attitude to religion is to be found in the later history of Hegelian theology in Germany. As is well known, Hegelianism very quickly divided itself into two very diverse streams of tendency known as its Left and Right Wings. "Hegel's religious philosophy," says Pfleiderer, "was from the first a *Janus bifrons*, from which accordingly the theology to which it gave birth was developed in two contrary directions."[2] On the one hand there were those who seized upon his tendency to believe that the creative insight of religion must always be in advance of that of philosophy, and understood him accordingly as an uncompromising champion of orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, and always in the majority, there were those who were more impressed by his insistence upon the unsatisfying nature of the *Vorstellung* as a cognitive form and by his own obviously greater personal attachment to philosophy. And, as Croce rightly argues, "it would be impossible to decide which of the two interpretations was the more faithful to the thought of Hegel; for both of them were founded upon Hegelian doctrines, and were opposed and hostile to one another, precisely because those doctrines were contradictory."[1]

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[1] F. Kattenbusch, in his well-known little monograph *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, did real service in pointing out the surprising resemblance of what Schleiermacher says about religion to some things that Hegel says about it. "Meines Erachtens," he writes, "ist zwischen Schleiermacher und Hegel in der Auffassung vom Wesen der Religion kein erheblicher Unterschied vorhanden." (Dritte Aufl., p. 18.) Perhaps, however, this is to go a little too far in view of his later statement: "Was für Hegel das spekulative Denken leistet, das leistet für Schleiermacher das schlechthinige Abhängigkeitsgefühl." (P. 22.)

[2] *Development of Theology*, Eng. transl., p. 131.

There is, however, one matter in which both divisions of the school are at one, because concerning it Hegel's teaching is quite unequivocal. This is the basic assumption that religion is characteristically and necessarily bound up with the *Vorstellung*, with picture-thinking, and would cease to be religion and become something else (namely, metaphysics) if its picture-thinking were to give place to deeper and exacter reflection. We call this assumption basic, because we believe it to be the ultimate foundation on which Hegel's whole *Religionsphilosophie* is built and to which the whole Hegelian manner of theologising owes its distinctive character. It is therefore on this assumption that we must concentrate our criticism.

Hegel would bind religion hand and foot, for good and all, to the forms and processes of what he calls "ordinary thought." These forms and processes, he believes, religion can only transcend by ceasing to be itself, by being given a wholly new start in the academies of learning and becoming transmuted into metaphysics. This view, as has been said, is common to Hegelians of every temper, to extreme conservatives like Marheineke no less than to extreme radicals like Strauss or Croce; but the most temperate statements of it are to be found among representatives of the English mediating school. Here is how it is put by John Caird:

> "Reason translates the necessarily inadequate language in which ordinary thought represents spiritual truth into that which is fitted to express its purely ideal reality. We can see at a glance that the language in which faith embodies its own practical needs cannot be taken in its bare and literal form as true or adequate to the realities it would represent. When, for instance, the religious thought of a primitive time applies to God anthropomorphical or sensuous conceptions—when it speaks of Him as having eyes to behold the righteous and ears that are open to their cry, when it conceives of Him as working for a certain period and then resting from His labours, or again as enthroned in some celestial locality or seat of power . . . we see at a glance, in these cases, that the form is not strictly homogeneous with the matter to be expressed, and that to get at the truth we must by reflection discount the merely symbolical or analogical element in the form in which it is expressed.

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[1] *What Is Living and What Is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, Eng. transl., p. 202.

But even to the language of a purer and more exalted spiritual experience a measure of the same inadequacy clings. . . ."

"And the general reason for this inadequacy is that faith speaks, and necessarily speaks, in the language of one world, the world of sense and sight, concerning the things of another world, the world unseen and eternal."

"Philosophy seeks to lead us to a higher point of view, from which the seeming contradictions vanish. . . ."[1]

Now in reading this and all the rest that Caird has to say on this head, it is difficult to avoid the impression that a certain side of the facts is being suppressed. We cannot help wondering whether it is in any sense true that religious faith is thus necessarily bound up with primitive and popular forms of expression. We cannot help asking whether, as a matter of historical fact, it was not *advancing faith itself*, rather than academic philosophy, which first became aware of the inadequacy of a God Who had eyes and ears and hands and feet and Who dwelt in temples made with hands. Perhaps the truth is that all that philosophy knows even on *this* matter was first learned in the school of practical religion. To say that the pure spirituality of God is an insight into which only philosophy can attain is to forget that it was religious faith which first foresaw that "the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father . . . but . . . the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."[2] Moreover when we are informed that "faith speaks, and necessarily speaks, in the language of one world concerning the things of another world," we cannot but wonder why this should be said of faith any more than of other mental activities. And we seem to find involved in this whole approach to religion a very serious fallacy, namely, that of comparing not the religion of any one people and period with the scientific philosophy of that same people and period but rather the religion of our most primitive ancestors with the scientific philosophy of our most enlightened and modern selves! The truth is, of course, that primitive science is hardly less anthropomorphic, and primitive metaphysics hardly less materialistic

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[1] *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. I, pp. 49–50, 55, 54. Another excellent summary example of the Hegelian way of approaching the religious problem is the first page of the same writer's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*

[2] John 4 : 21, 23.

(or at least 'hylozoic'), than is primitive religion; and that the development of religion has been as distinctly away from these false tendencies as has the development of science and metaphysics. It was to an ancient Hebrew prophet that the Spirit of God spake and said: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."[1] Nothing, therefore, could possibly be more grotesquely untrue than the pronouncement of the Hegelian Feuerbach that "religion knows nothing of anthropomorphisms; to it they are not anthropomorphisms";[2] and we cannot do better than quote von Hügel's very sensible comment upon it:

> "It is certainly contrary to the facts that religion, as such, 'knows nothing of anthropomorphisms,' *i. e.*, that religion, as such, is unaware of the inadequacy of all human thought and language to the realities, even simply as these are experienced by the soul. 'O the depth of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, his ways past tracing out!' This cry of St. Paul (Rom. 11 : 33) expresses the very soul of religion."[3]

We are forced to conclude, then, that Hegel and the Hegelian theologians do serious injustice to religious faith by thus limiting its own native range of self-expression to the realm of popular, pictorial, and "materialised" thinking. It is true, of course, that the religion of the large mass of mankind continues to this day to be clothed in figures and symbols that are inadequate to its true content; but this is true not of their religion alone, nor of their religion especially, but equally of all their thinking. Hegel, however, was not afraid of depreciating the cognitive value of faith, because it was not in faith that he put his trust but in philosophy. And indeed such depreciation was not only not unwelcome to him but even served a positive purpose; for it was only by thus representing faith, if not at its lowest and poorest, at least in what was far from being its highest expressions and developments, that he was able to win any real plausibility for his contention that it stood in need of supplementation and revision on the part of philosophy.

The essential defect of Hegelianism is thus common to both wings of the Hegelian development, and it is difficult to know which of the two embodiments of it, the radical or the reactionary, is the more to be deplored. In the Left Wing the master's insistence upon the irredeemably popular and pictorial character of religious thinking soon led to the facile identification of dogma with mythology, and so to the virtual dismissal of religion from the philosopher's spiritual stock in trade. This is the position of Strauss, and more lately of Croce. But hardly less disastrous than this complete discounting of all religious insight was the tendency of the Hegelians of the Right to accept without distinction and, as it were, to swallow in the lump the whole religious tradition as it stood. The kind of wholesale reinstatement of dogma which characterises the writings of Marheineke, Daub, and others of the same temper is not really the highest form of tribute to the great expression of the spirit of man with which they have here to do. Too often we have the feeling that it is all allowed to pass, only because none of it is held to be quite true. There is a failure to discriminate between what is vital and what is merely secondary and incidental: between the living and the outworn. We hear little of faith's progressive criticism of its own detail, and we cannot help suspecting that this is because there lurks all the while in the background philosophy's all-embracing critical discounting of the whole. Often there has been as much fundamental religious scepticism behind the undiscriminating conservatism of the Right as behind the more subversive illusionism of the Left. A good example is Hegel's own treatment of the Doctrine of the Trinity, which has been eagerly seized upon by almost all his followers.[1] Is there not more genuine faith, more real religion, behind Schleiermacher's virtual omission of this doctrine from his theological scheme than behind Hegel's elevation of it to the central place? Is it not because the native utterances of faith as a whole are taken so much less seriously by Hegel than by Schleiermacher that he finds some of them so much easier to accept than does his illustrious contemporary? Yet what greater disservice could philosophy render to religion than that it should thus tend in any degree to stifle the self-criticism of advancing faith?

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[1] Isaiah 55 : 8–9.

[2] *Essence of Christianity*, transl. George Eliot, p. 24.

[3] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 39. See also the sequel.

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[1] "The Trinity is the distinctively Christian idea of God," says even John Caird. —*Fundamental Ideas*, vol. II, p. 58.

We may therefore conclude by endorsing another statement of Professor Webb's. "The view," he writes, "which sees in religion nothing but an imperfect and inferior kind of knowledge does not . . . stand in need of refutation for any one who knows for himself from within what religion is."[1]

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[1] *God and Personality*, p. 158.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANTICIST THEORY OF RELIGION

I The Theory Defined.

HAVING dealt with the rationalistic theory of religion, we must now deal with the theory or group of theories which represents the opposite extreme of the pendulum's swing, that is to say, with the romanticist theory or group of theories of religion. As is well known, it was not until the closing years of the eighteenth century that the pendulum of Western thought showed definite signs of a movement in this direction, the long reign of rationalism giving way at last to what has come to be called romanticism.

The Romantic Movement made itself felt in almost every region of spiritual activity—in poetry and in literature generally, in music, in æsthetic theory, in political theory, in ethical theory, and in many other fields; and in each field it stood for very much the same thing—for a tendency to be altogether done with reason and to fall back upon other and simpler forms of mental life. We are here concerned with the movement only in so far as it has made its appearance in the field of theological theory; and there it has taken the form of *an attempt to find the real source and spring of the religious consciousness somewhere in the mind below the level at which reflective thought arises, that is, somewhere in the pre-rational or pre-intellectual region.* Religion, we are now told, neither consists in nor rests upon ideas or judgments of any sort whatsoever; what are called religious ideas being rather the products of after-reflection upon the religious consciousness than a constitutive part of that consciousness itself. It is held that the difficulties and absurdities of rationalism can be avoided in no other way than by thus totally discarding the attempt to look upon religion as any kind of thought-construction or product of reflective intelligence.

This romanticist theory of religion is obviously capable of appearing in as many different varieties as it is possible, on the basis of any and every psychological analysis, to conceive of mental elements, or phases of mental life, that fall below the level of ideation and intellection.

Schleiermacher's view That Religion Is an Affair of Feeling -

II

The mental element to which appeal was most commonly made in the first age of romanticism, and in almost every sphere in which the movement made itself felt, was *feeling*. Indeed the historians of the period have not infrequently spoken of the Age of Reason giving place at last to the "Age of Feeling." And it is to feeling that we are referred by the greatest of all romanticist theologians, Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher's theory of religion found its first famous expression in his *Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers* published in 1799, and especially in the second speech, entitled "The Nature of Religion." The argument of this speech we must follow in some detail. Schleiermacher begins by dwelling on the impossibility of identifying religion either with science and philosophy on the one hand or with morals on the other; or with a mixture of the two, so as to make it an "instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs." Indeed, he goes on, "religion resigns at once all claims on anything that belongs either to science or to morality." "However high you go; though you pass from the laws to the Universal Lawgiver, in whom is the unity of all things; though you allege that nature cannot be comprehended without God, I would still maintain that religion has nothing to do with this knowledge." For, clearly, "quantity of knowledge is not quantity of piety. Piety can gloriously display itself, both with originality and individuality, in those to whom this kind of knowledge is not original." The scientist may "set God at the apex of his science," but that is not the religious man's "way of having and knowing God"; the religious man is "not concerned with the nature of the first cause." The philosopher may "prove a Trinity in the Highest Being," but "I would maintain that this is not a Christian Trinity because, being a speculative idea, it has its origin in another part of the soul." "Were religion really the highest knowledge, the scientific method alone would be suitable for its extension, and religion could be acquired by study, a thing not hitherto asserted. . . . Therefore I cannot hold religion to be the highest knowledge, or indeed knowledge at all. Wherefore, what the Christian layman has in less perfection than the theologian and which manifestly is a knowledge is not religion itself but something appended to it."

Religion, therefore, being neither knowledge nor conduct, must be a third thing alongside of these two. "Only by keeping quite outside the range both of science and of practice can it maintain its proper sphere and character. Only when piety takes its place alongside of science and practice, as a necessary, an indispensable, third, as their natural counterpart, not less in worth and splendour than either, will the common field be altogether occupied and human nature on this side complete." Now psychology teaches us that there are three essential elements in all mental life: "perception, feeling, and activity." The first issues in knowledge, in the scientific life; the third issues in conduct, in the moral life. "How then are you to name the series of feeling? What life will it form? The religious, as I think, and as you will not be able to deny, when you have considered it more closely. The chief point in my speech is now uttered. This is the peculiar sphere which I would assign to religion. . . . Unless you grant it, you must either prefer the old confusion to clear analysis, or produce something else, I know not what, new and quite wonderful."[1]

Religion, then, is essentially feeling—such is Schleiermacher's central position. But there is another term which from this point onward begins to creep into the discussion, the German term *Anschauung*, which perhaps can best be represented in English as 'intuition.' In the first edition of the *Speeches* Schleiermacher freely couples the two words together. Religion, he says again and again, is "intuition and feeling" (*Anschauung und Gefühl*). Seven years later, in 1806, he published a second edition of the work in which the second speech was largely recast, and now the references to intuition are largely excised and "intuition and feeling" becomes simply "feeling." And in the *Christian Faith*, published in 1821, the use of the word intuition virtually disappears. Yet the reader feels that the single term feeling is still so employed as to do duty for the compound phrase, so that it becomes of the utmost importance to be clear as to what exactly Schleiermacher means by feeling.

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[1] The above passages will all be found in the second speech as it appears in the second edition of the *Reden*. With a few trifling exceptions I have followed Oman's translation.

The task is by no means an easy one, because it is difficult to escape the impression of serious confusion in our author's own mind on the subject. But we must do our best. According to Schleiermacher's psychology, then, mental life begins in a purely passive reception of impressions from the surrounding universe. In the first edition of the *Speeches* he speaks as if two elements could be distinguished in this experience, namely, the awareness of being impressed and an "affective," not to say emotional, response to the impression. The former is intuition; the latter is feeling. "Every intuition," he tells us, "is by its very nature bound up with a feeling."[1] As time goes on, however, Schleiermacher more and more tends to abandon the idea that the two elements can be distinguished from one another. In the second edition of the *Speeches* the distinction is retained in one passage and then allowed to lapse; in the *Christian Faith* intuition (as has been said) entirely disappears and the new phrase "immediate self-consciousness" (*unmittelbare Selbstbewusstsein*) is introduced as equivalent to feeling. The theory now is that feeling, as the affective or pleasure-pain element in consciousness, is to be identified with that primordial phase of consciousness, that purely immediate and passive experience of receiving impressions from the outside universe which is prior to both cognition (as the active effort to grasp) and conation (as the active effort to change that which is responsible for our impressions).[2] In a word, feeling is that first immediate awareness of things which precedes the earliest form either of knowledge or of desire.

The question now arises whether all feeling is, as such, religious, or whether religion is rather one particular kind of feeling. It is a question which obviously presents difficulties for Schleiermacher, and his answers to it show considerable variety. His general answer is perhaps that religion is a feeling *of the infinite;* an awareness of being impressed by, and a sensibility to, the universe as a whole. It is, in what is perhaps the most familiar of all his phrases, "a sense and taste for the Infinite" (*Sinn und Geschmack fürs Unendliche*);[1] and this becomes in his later *magnum opus* "a feeling of absolute dependence, which is the same as to say a feeling of dependence upon God."[2] But —so contends Schleiermacher in both editions of the *Speeches*— every feeling is really, *so far as it goes,* a feeling of the Infinite, since all our impressions come to us from the Infinite Universe which is God; and therefore "all healthy feelings are pious."[3] "Your feeling is pious," he writes, "in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you."[4] No conclusion, surely, could more fully breathe the spirit of the Romantic Movement; nor could the following passage, descriptive of our immediate and essentially religious contact with the universe in primordial feeling, have easily been penned at any other period in the history of thought:

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[1] Otto's edition (a reprint of the 1st ed.), p. 35.

[2] Otto (p. 26 n.) thus summarises Schleiermacher's thought: "Die Religion will nicht das Universum begreifen wie die Metaphysik, will nicht darauf wirken wie das sittliche Handeln, sondern will es andächtig erleben in unmittelbarem Anschauen und Fühlen."

> "Did I venture to compare it, seeing I cannot describe it, I would say it is fleeting and transparent as the vapour which the dew breathes on blossom and fruit, it is bashful and tender as a maiden's kiss, it is holy and fruitful as a bridal embrace. Nor is it merely like, it *is* all this. It is the first contact of the universal life with an individual. It fills no time and fashions nothing palpable. It is the holy wedlock of the Universe with the incarnated Reason for a creative, productive embrace. It is immediate, raised above all error and understanding. You lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world. In that moment you are its soul."[5]

In the *Christian Faith* this position tends to be abandoned, and religion is presented rather as "the highest grade of feeling," the feeling, namely, of "absolute dependence," in contradistinction from all other and lower feelings; though it is still claimed that this highest feeling "is never found in separation from the lower grades of feeling with their antithesis of the pleasant and the painful."[6] "The common element," he now tells us, "in all howsoever diverse expressions of piety, by which these are conjointly distinguished from all other feelings, or, in other words, the self-identical essence of piety, is this: the consciousness of absolute dependence, or, which is the same thing, of our relation with God."[1]

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[1] Otto's edition, p. 28.

[2] *Der christliche Glaube,* 1st ed., § 9; 2d ed., § 4.

[3] Oman's translation, p. 46, and the note thereto in the 2d ed. (Oman, p. 105).

[4] Oman, p. 45. *Cf.* p. 90, where it is said that "our feelings are the immediate product of the universe." *Cf.* also p. 93 *ad fin.*

[5] Oman, p. 43.

[6] 1st ed., §§ 10–11; 2d ed., § 5.

The question thus remains, What then of doctrines and creeds, of religious ideas and convictions? What relation do they bear to that infra-rational state of feeling which alone *is* religion? And how comes it that they are so generally supposed to constitute the very core of religion? Schleiermacher's answer to this question is always quite definite and clear. It is simply that religious ideas—and with them all doctrines, creeds, and confessions—are the result of later reflection upon religious feeling; so many efforts, that is to say, to describe what one has experienced. To religion itself "ideas and principles are all foreign."[2] For "all is immediately true in religion . . . but that only is immediate which *has not yet passed through the stage of idea but has grown up purely in the feeling*."[3] But "as a feeling person you can become an object to yourself and you can contemplate your own feeling. . . . Would you now call the general description of the nature of your feelings that is the product of this contemplation a principle, and the description of each feeling an idea, you are certainly free to do so. And if you call them religious principles and ideas, you are not in error. But do not forget that this is scientific treatment of religion, knowledge about it, and not religion itself."[4] Most of the harsh things, therefore, which men say about religion should properly be said about theology. "They rest upon the confusion between religion and that knowledge which is theology."[5] Even of the idea of God it must be said that "there can be much piety without it, and that it is first formed when piety is made an object of contemplation."[6] "The manner in which the Deity is present to man in feeling is decisive of the worth of his religion, not the manner, always inadequate, in which it is copied in idea."[7] In the *Christian Faith* this view-point is adhered to with the most admirable consistency. At the beginning it is laid down that "Christian doctrines are accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech."[8] Then, as each individual doctrine comes up for discussion, the attempt is made to exhibit it as the result of later reflection upon immediate Christian feeling; and if it cannot be so exhibited, it is set aside as being not properly indigenous to Christian theology.

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[1] 2d ed., § 4, trans. D. M. Baillie (Edinburgh, 1922), p. 7.

[2] *Reden*, trans. Oman, p. 46.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 54. Italics mine.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[8] Trans. D. M. Baillie, p. 9.

III

Criticism of this View.

What then are we to say about this theory of religion? Whatever may be our final verdict concerning it, our first feeling can hardly fail to be one of warm gratitude for the great service which it undoubtedly rendered to theology at one of the most critical moments of its history. To Schleiermacher belongs the distinguished merit of having been the first to provide any fully reasoned alternative to rationalism. And the alternative he suggested was one which proved, in not a few important respects, to point in the right direction. Schleiermacher saw clearly that religion must once and for all be made independent of that "effort to penetrate into the nature and substance of things"[1] which found its culmination in modern scientific cosmology. He was right, profoundly right, in contending that the roots of religion lie deeper down in the soul than all speculative attempts to explain the world. He was right also in insisting that religion must never be identified with 'mere morality,' its true sphere lying somewhere between intellectual research on the one hand and ethical practice on the other. But was he therefore right in concluding that it could be nothing but 'pure and immediate feeling'? That is the question which must here particularly concern us.

For Schleiermacher's theory, obviously, everything turns on the doctrine that feeling is in itself psychologically prior to the two other elements of mental life, knowledge and will. Feeling he believes to be, as such, "immediate"—that is to say, unmediated by ideas of any kind; so that it is through feeling alone that we first become aware of our environment, knowledge and desire being both alike secondary and 'mediate' products of such awareness. Reference to the history of psychology will at once show us that this doctrine constituted the backbone of the Romanticist psychology. "This doctrine," writes the late Professor Ward, "was a natural reaction from the one-sided 'intellectualism' which culminated in the teaching of the Leibniz-Wolffians. . . .

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[1] *Reden*, trans. Oman, p. 49.

It seems to have been fostered by—if it did not originate in—the 'sentimentalism' of Rousseau and the Romanticists. From the 'faith and feeling philosophy' of Herder and Jacobi it passed over to the psychology of Beneke and Fortlage. . . ."[1]

This notion that "feeling alone is primordial" is, however, one which the advance of psychology since Schleiermacher's day has made less and less tenable. Its weakness has never been more clearly exposed than by Professor Ward, whose criticism we shall therefore follow somewhat closely. He shows how the plausibility of the doctrine is largely dependent on the vagueness and ambiguity of the word feeling, which may be taken as denoting

> "(*a*) a touch, as feeling of roughness; (*b*) an organic sensation, as feeling of hunger; (*c*) an emotion, as feeling of anger; (*d*) *any* purely subjective state, as feeling of certainty or of activity; (*e*) the *one* subjective state that is purely 'affective,' as feeling of pleasure or pain."

The last-mentioned alone is feeling in the proper sense, as distinguished from cognition and conation, and it is obviously in this sense that the psychology which Schleiermacher is following *intends* to affirm that feeling is the one primary form of experience. Now if we do understand the contention in this strict sense, the only proof that could be offered in its support would, as Ward says, be something like this:

> "So far as we can judge, as we work downward from higher to lower forms of life, the possible variety and the definiteness of sense-impressions both steadily diminish. Moreover we can directly observe in certain organic sensations—and these seem to come nearest to the whole content of primitive or infantile experience—scarcely any evidence of any assignable *quale*. Finally, in our sense-experience generally, we find the element of feeling at a maximum in the lower senses and the cognitive element at a maximum in the higher. . . . If, then, feeling predominates more and more as we approach the beginning of conscious life, may we not conclude that feeling is its only essential constituent?"

Ward's answer is that such a conclusion is in no wise warranted.

> "A triangle may be diminished indefinitely, and yet we cannot infer that it becomes eventually all angles, though the angles get no less and the sides do."

The only safe way of settling the question as to whether feeling can have preceded cognition and conation is to inquire into the relation in which it stands to them in our own present experience. And the result of such inquiry must be as follows:

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[1] *Psychological Principles*, p. 42 n.

> "We have not *first* a change of feeling, and *then* a change in our sensations, perceptions, and ideas; but, these changing, change of feeling follows. In short, feeling appears to be an effect, which therefore cannot exist without its cause. . . . *The simplest form of psychical life, therefore, involves not only a subject feeling but a subject having qualitatively distinguishable objective presentations which are the cause of its feeling.*"[1]

As Ward goes on to say, however, the theory loses the main part of its plausibility if it is obliged to be thus precise in its usage of the term feeling, and in particular if it is forced to discriminate carefully between feeling and sensation, *i. e.*, between sensibility and sense. It can hardly be questioned that in many places where Schleiermacher says "feeling," he is in reality speaking of what we should call sensation and sense-perception, though he supposes himself to be still speaking of the second of the three elements distinguished by the familiar analysis of mental life. In the first edition of the *Speeches* he had defined religion as "sense and taste for the Infinite"; in the second edition a note is added to say that "sense" here means not "sense-perception" but "sensibility"; yet we feel that to take this interpretation in earnest would be to rob his theory of most of its plausibility. If religion is mere sensibility for the Infinite, that is to say, a mere *liking* for the Infinite, it cannot for a moment be conceived as being prior to *knowledge* of the Infinite. We cannot like or dislike a thing, we cannot be pleased or pained by it, until we have become aware of it through sensation, perception, or some other mode of cognition, and to a certain extent grasped its nature.[2] "Pure feeling," prior to and without any admixture of cognition, would mean an awareness of being pleased or displeased without the most rudimentary knowledge as to what it was that was pleasing or displeasing us, or (what is the same thing) the most rudimentary determination of the character of our pleasure or pain. Even, however, if such a state were conceivable, it would obviously not answer Schleiermacher's purpose. The feeling which is religious is, according to him, no such indeterminate subjective state of pleasedness; rather is it in the first place an awareness of finite things, but an awareness which is religious only in so far as we become aware of the Infinite through and in the finite. "Any feeling," he says, "is not an emotion of piety because in it a single object as such affects us, but only in so far as in it and along with it, it affects us as revelation of God."[1] Feeling is thus for Schleiermacher, as Feuerbach well expresses it, "the organ of the Infinite." The case of Schleiermacher, therefore, seems very clearly to illustrate what Ward says about the Romanticist psychology generally—that "when feeling is said to be the primordial element in consciousness, more is generally included under feeling than pure pleasure and pain, *viz.*, some characteristic or quality by which one pleasurable or painful sensation is distinguishable from another."[2]

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[1] All the above passages will be found in Ward's *Psychological Principles*, pp. 41–45, or in the article on "Psychology" in *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed., p. 40.

[2] If it be objected that we can be seized with a sudden internal 'pain' and suffer from it before we grasp anything about its nature, we would remind the objector that such a pain is not what is meant by 'feeling' when we speak of 'knowing, feeling, and willing,' but is a kind of *sensation*—an organic sensation, as it is called— and that the awareness of it therefore includes some element of knowing. "Organic pains," says Ward, "are not only always more or less definitely localised—and this of itself is so far cognition—but they may often be distinguished as shooting, burning, gnawing, etc., all which symptoms indicate a certain objective quality."—*Principles*, pp. 44–45.

The 'more' in Schleiermacher's case is *Anschauung*. He began, as we have seen, by admitting *Anschauung* along with feeling into that primary precognitive form of consciousness in which he believed religion to be born. Very soon, however, he seems to have realised the hopelessly contradictory nature of this position: *Anschauung* being so clearly a kind of cognition. Gradually, therefore, the term *Anschauung* is allowed to disappear. But the meaning is retained, "feeling" alone now being made to do full duty for what was before "feeling and intuition"; nor can we help thinking that if the meaning were *not* so retained, the plausibility of Schleiermacher's main contention would immediately vanish. "Intuition of the Universe" (*Anschauung des Universums*); "an awareness of the Infinite in the finite" or of the influences upon us of finite things "not by themselves but as a part of the Whole, not as limited and in opposition to other things but as an exhibition of the Infinite in our life"; "the immediate consciousness of the Deity as He is found in ourselves and in the world"; "a feeling of absolute dependence, as being in relation with God"—these are some of the expressions which Schleiermacher uses to describe the essence of religion; and it must be said that there is not one of them that does not describe a definitely cognitive state. What could be meant by a feeling of dependence which was altogether apart from the apprehension that we are dependent, and dependent on something? How could we have a feeling for (or a feeling of being in relation to) the Infinite Universe if we had not already, however vaguely, formed the *idea* of the Infinite Universe in our minds—and this is surely an idea which is a very complex and advanced product of our powers of ideation? The truth is that *if we try to get behind knowledge, we get behind feeling too.* Even if we were permitted (as of course we cannot be permitted) to regard sense-perception as a form of precognitive feeling, we could not claim that any awareness of the Infinite or of God is given us in sense-perception as such. A worm, a frog, a human baby may doubtless be "influenced by the universe" in such a way as to be aware of finite things in it, but only a man can be aware of the Infinite, of the Universe recognised as such, or of God. And that is to say that the true seat of religion cannot after all be found in our nature as sentient but only in our nature as intelligent.

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[1] *Reden*, tr. Oman, p. 93.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 45. *Cf.* C. C. J. Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, p. 71: "If there is nothing in Religion but feeling, one feeling is (as such) as good as another. As feelings they can be distinguished only as pleasant and unpleasant. To discriminate them further we must refer to what may be called their content, that is, to the characteristics which may be discovered in them by analysis, when we are no longer absorbed by the feeling, but asking ourselves what this feeling which we have had *is* or *means*. Thus we are thrown back into the sphere of Reason, the discriminating, classifying, generalizing faculty from whose tyranny we were endeavouring to escape."

Perhaps we have now said enough to demonstrate the psychological untenability of Schleiermacher's theory; but something must be added concerning its religious inadequacy. Feeling, it must be said, is both too indefinite and too subjective a thing to be made the basis of faith in God. ✓

First, it is too *indefinite.* When taken by itself, indeed, feeling has no other definiteness than to be positive or negative, pleasant or painful. Further definiteness is given to it only when it becomes determined by some cognition, when it becomes a feeling *of* something. It is only the very vaguest feelings that could possibly appear to be independent of cognition, and in reality not even these can be so regarded. A vague feeling is, properly speaking, not different *as feeling* from a definite feeling but is only a feeling aroused by a very vaguely apprehended object. Schleier-

[illegible] could know Him and fellowship with Him? And only we just now the
first of these high things? And are those of our fellows who admit [illegible]
and know him not unfortunate in that they are not awakened enough?

macher was able to make the religious consciousness look like feeling only by reducing it to its vaguest form; or rather by reducing it to something so vague and indeterminate as not to be properly worthy of the name of religion at all, though indeed bearing some superficial resemblance to religion's vaguest expressions—a "sense of the Infinite," an "intuition of the Universe." As this sense of the Infinite is supposed to be given in the most rudimentary form of consciousness, we may justly feel that it would better be called a sense of the Indefinite—the true concept of Infinity being, as has been said, a very advanced product of reflection. The only form of religion, therefore, which Schleiermacher is strictly able to bring within the compass of his definition is the vaguest kind of Pantheism; and in the *Speeches* there is much to suggest an issue of this kind. It is indeed true that as he grew older and maturer, he began to realise the inadequacy of the Universe and the Infinite (in this sense of them, as realities immediately given in every awareness of finite things) as substitutes for the God of religion. And in the *Christian Faith* he sets them aside entirely, endeavouring at the same time to get back the definiteness thus lost by a closer determination of the character of the feeling itself, which he now calls a "feeling of absolute dependence." Yet since the 'God' of whom he now at last freely speaks must still be regarded as merely the name given to the Being whom later reflection postulates as the necessary cause of the feeling, the result is still a very patent impoverishment of religion as it is known in history and in individual experience. The God of feeling is in no sense a personal God, nor is the immortality of feeling a personal immortality. Moreover we cannot but feel that the suggestion of a vague Pantheism as being the typical and normal form of religion, however much it may seem to be removed by the erasure of phrases like "the Infinite Universe," is still latently present in the characterisation of the religious feeling as being one merely of *absolute dependence.*

Secondly, feeling is too *subjective* a thing to be made the basis of any spiritual activity which, like religion, lays claim to objective significance. Feeling is indeed hardly more than another name for the subjective element in experience, for what we call "the personal equation," for that in experience which is not the same in any two individuals. But any theology which thus relegates the religious consciousness to a purely subjective region of mental life must be held thereby to refute itself, since nothing is more certain than that religion *means* to be objectively true. This impossibility of retaining for religion any claim to objectivity, if it be held to originate in feeling alone, has never been more clearly demonstrated than by Ludwig Feuerbach, who was, however, entirely willing to accept this consequence. He writes as follows with reference to Schleiermacher's position:

> "It is clear that where feeling is held to be the organ of the infinite—the subjective essence of religion, the external data of religion lose their objective value."
>
> "If God were a being distinct from thy feeling, he would be known to thee in some other way than simply in feeling; but just because thou perceivest him only by feeling, he exists only in feeling—*he is himself only feeling.*"
>
> "The last refuge of theology therefore is feeling. God is renounced by the understanding; he has no longer the dignity of a real object, of a reality which imposes itself on the understanding; hence he is transferred to feeling; in feeling his existence is thought to be secure. And doubtless this is the safest refuge; for to make feeling the essence of religion is nothing else than to make feeling the essence of God. And as certainly as I exist, so certainly does my feeling exist; and as certainly as my feeling exists, so certainly does my God exist."[1]

Out of our dissatisfaction with Schleiermacher's theory at least one positive conclusion therefore seems to emerge, namely, that no account of religion can be worthy of its object which endeavours to exhibit it as anything less than a firm and clear *conviction,* having its birth in the fullest daylight of human thought and intelligence.

Reappearance of this view in the American Psychology of Religion.

IV

It would perhaps not have repaid us to enter so fully into Schleiermacher's view of religion had it possessed merely historical interest as a product of the Romantic Movement at the end of the eighteenth century. In fact, however, the view has recently made its reappearance in the theological arena, and withal very much in its original form, though for the most part without any apparent awareness of its real provenance. Within the

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[1] *Wesen des Christentums,* George Eliot's translation, pp. 9, 278, 277.

American school of the Psychology of Religion the theory has once again gained dominance that the seat of religion lies in a region of 'feeling' which is held to be psychologically prior to knowledge and will. And once again this theory appears, in close league with Pragmatism, as a radical reaction against a particular form of rationalism or intellectualism; this time for the most part against the Absolute Idealism of the Neo-Hegelian schools. ✓

In his book on *The Essence of Christianity*, published in 1902, Professor William Adams Brown adds the following comment to his brief exposition of Schleiermacher's definition of religion:

> "It is, indeed, the fashion to-day to criticise his definition as inadequate and one-sided. Religion, we are told, is much more than feeling. It is an affair of the whole man, and includes intellect and will as well. Such criticism, however technically justified, rests upon a misapprehension of Schleiermacher's purpose. He is not attempting an exhaustive definition of religion. He is calling attention to the fact, of which his contemporaries, both orthodox and rationalist, had lost sight, that religion is an integral element in human life, having its roots below all that is secondary and derived, in the recesses of the emotional nature."[1]

Here then we once again find championed the Romanticist contentions that our affective and emotional nature is primordial, having recesses below all that is secondary and derived, and that it is in these recesses that religion has its roots. Professor Adams Brown's book dates from the same year as James' *Varieties of Religious Experience,* where we find these same contentions set out with a detail that merits our careful attention.

We may begin by noting the account given by James himself of the rationalism against which he is reacting:

> "The intellectualism in religion which I wish to discredit pretends to . . . construct religious objects out of the resources of logical reason alone, or of logical reason drawing rigorous inference from non-subjective facts. It calls its conclusions dogmatic theology, or philosophy of the absolute, as the case may be; it does not call them science of religions. It reaches them in an a priori way, and warrants their veracity."[2]

We shall, of course, be in entire sympathy with James in his desire to discredit this kind of theology. Doubts begin to arise only when he goes on to indicate the direction in which he hopes to make good his escape from it:

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 433.

> "I do believe that feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue. . . . When I call theological formulas secondary products, I mean that in a world in which no religious feeling ever existed, I doubt whether any philosophic theology could ever have been framed. I doubt if dispassionate intellectual contemplation of the universe, apart from inner unhappiness and need of deliverance on the one hand and mystical emotion on the other, would ever have resulted in religious philosophies such as we now possess. . . . Conceptions and constructions are . . . a necessary part of our religion. . . . Religious experience, in other words, spontaneously and inevitably engenders myths, superstitions, dogmas, creeds, and metaphysical theologies. . . . But all these intellectual operations, whether they be constructive or comparative and critical, presuppose immediate experiences as their subject-matter. They are interpretative and inductive operations, consequent upon religious feeling, not co-ordinate with it, not independent of what it ascertains."[1]

At a later point he tells us that the reason why he has "seemed so bent on rehabilitating the element of feeling in religion and subordinating its intellectual part" is that "individuality is founded in feeling; and the recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world in which we catch real fact in the making."[2] "The theories which religion generates," he adds, "are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant elements."[3]

We cannot but be struck by the almost verbal identity of all this with what Schleiermacher had said a hundred years earlier. Slight difference begins to emerge only when the American psychologist introduces the new-fangled conception of the subliminal or subconscious self as largely correlative with that domain of feeling to which he has relegated religion:

> "When, in addition to these phenomena of inspiration, we take religious mysticism into account, . . . we cannot, I think, avoid the conclusion that in religion we have a department of human nature with unusually close relations to the transmarginal or subliminal region. . . . [This region] contains, for example, such things as all our momentarily inactive memories, and it harbours the springs of all our obscurely motived passions, impulses, likes, dislikes, and prejudices. Our intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions, persuasions, convictions, and in general all non-

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 431–433. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 501. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 504.

> rational operations, come from it. . . . It is also the fountainhead of much that feeds our religion."[1]

And yet the *use* which he makes of the conception of the subliminal self once again reminds us vividly of Schleiermacher's doctrine about the consciousness of the Infinite that comes to us in our awareness of finite things. The religious man, James tells us, becomes conscious that the higher part of him

> "is conterminous and continuous with a *More* of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with. . . . Let me then propose as an hypothesis, that whatever it may be on its *farther* side, the 'more' with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its *hither* side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life. . . . The conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come. . . . The farther limits of our being plunge, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely 'understandable' world. . . . God is the natural appellation, for us Christians at least, for the supreme reality, so I will call this higher part of the universe by the name of God."[2]

Here once again the theology of feeling seems to leave its unmistakable stamp upon the conception of God.

From among many similar statements emanating from the same school we may select one for further brief mention—Professor Pratt's *Psychology of Religious Belief*, already more than once alluded to, and published five years after James' work. The book opens with a psychological theory of "the elements of psychic life," in which the traditional tripartite analysis is criticised, and there is substituted for it what claims to be the more profound division between the 'centre' and the 'fringe' of consciousness, between "the closely reasoned product of articulate thought, on the one hand," and "the unreasoned intuitional or emotional product of feeling, on the other." These "two chief kinds of psychic stuff" are further defined as follows:

> "One of these consists of the definite, describable, communicable elements of consciousness; the rational, the cognitive, the representative; the material which may be made public property by means of scientific and exact description. The other class is made up of the indefinite, the indescribable, the peculiarly private mass of subjective experiences. . . ."[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 483–484.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 508, 512, 515, 516.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

Professor Pratt goes on to tell us that though in an earlier essay, published twelve months before, he had virtually identified feeling with this marginal consciousness, or background of consciousness, he now believes them to be "clearly distinguishable," though "very closely related" and "together forming the second of the two great divisions" of psychic life. He therefore proposes to "refer to this division of non-rational and non-cognitive fringe and feeling phenomena as the 'feeling-background,' or the 'feeling-mass,' or some equivalent expression." It seems, he says, "to be the primary form of consciousness."[1] Proceeding now to discuss the nature of belief, he distinguishes three different forms of it—primitive credulity,[2] intellectual belief, and belief based on feeling or on the "feeling-mass." Each of these ways of believing gives rise to a corresponding type of religion which Professor Pratt traces at length throughout the historical development of religion in the world. In a concluding chapter he asks which of the three kinds of religion is destined in the future to justify itself and to survive, and he decides in favour of the "Religion of Feeling" which is based on "emotional conviction." Primitive credulity is fast disappearing. The inability of reason to furnish a satisfactory foundation for religion is more and more being realised. Hence "in abandoning reason as a sufficient basis for religion, we are forced back on the religion of feeling and of instinctive and unreasoned demands and intuitions. Here must religion take up her stand and make her fight."[3] "Religious belief will stand or fall with what I have called the Religion of Feeling."[4] As by James, so now by Professor Pratt, this Religion of Feeling is historically identified with mysticism, which, we are told, "might be defined as belief in God based chiefly on an immediate experience whose dominant element is feeling."[5] And the book closes with words which betray the influence of the same master:

> "This evidence which all the mystics bear to a vast reservoir of life beyond us, which is like ours and with which our life may make connections, is the one dogma of the Religion of Feeling."[6]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

[2] For criticism of this conception, see pp. 96 ff. *supra.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 302–303.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 304. A similar view is represented by Professor Rufus Jones, the distinguished American authority on mysticism: "There are regions in us which underlie our cleverest logic, our clearest thinking, our most accurate calculating. Our memo-

We have already, in dealing with Schleiermacher, said all we have to say in criticism of this whole position; nor does it appear that any of the difficulties which we found to reside in the earlier Theology of Feeling are avoided in these later restatements of it. On the other hand, we cannot but feel something of that same measure of indebtedness towards writers like James and Professor Pratt which we have already expressed ourselves as feeling towards their great predecessor. They have done much to make clear the absurdities of the rationalistic reading of religion and to render impossible any considerable return to it in our own time; and our gratitude for this service need not be seriously lessened by the fact that their own reading of religion appears, on close inspection, to be hardly less open to objection and criticism.

V

Perceptualist Views of the Nature of Religious Knowledge.

It has already been hinted that feeling, though it is the most important, is nevertheless by no means the only infra-rational element in consciousness with which during the last century it has been sought to correlate religion. We propose in this section to deal with that variety of the romanticist theory of religion which would correlate it not with feeling but rather with *sensation and perception;* for just as in the realm of ethics the Romantic Movement brought with it a "Moral Sense School" as well as a "Moral Feeling School," so also in the realm of theology appeal was made to a religious sense as well as to religious feeling.

It will be seen at once that whereas this new view agrees with the view we have just been considering in affirming the pre-rational nature of religion, it differs from it in not affirming religion to be *pre-cognitive;* for perception is, of course, the primary form of cognition.

In dealing with the theory of a religious sense we are under the great disadvantage of not being able to appeal for reference to any very distinguished or authoritative statement of it. The theory has been common enough in certain quarters and has ex-

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ries and our imaginations spring to birth out of a deeper innermost life in which all so-called 'states' of consciousness are embedded, and deep lies under deep." (*Concerning Prayer*, ed. B. H. Streeter, p. 109.) And it is in this underground region that he believes the religious 'experience' to be enjoyed by us.

ercised a wide popular influence, and yet it has never been fortunate enough to receive either exact statement or well-argued defence at the hands of a great thinker. What we have to deal with is thus rather a vague and diffused tendency than a precisely defined theory. Not uncommonly, too, the tendency in question is of a more or less subterranean kind, its presence being only half acknowledged (if not indeed expressly denied) by many of those writers in whom we seem to recognise it. We have already seen how this was true of Schleiermacher; how alongside of his official view of religion as non-cognitive and purely affective in character there was always present, in greater or less measure, this other view of it as a kind of perception, an *Anschauung des Universums*—a viewing or contemplating, an intuition or perception, of the Universe; and how, notwithstanding the fact that everything that might seem to be a verbal acknowledgment of this latter meaning was more and more expunged by him from his writings, yet the meaning itself remained and was largely necessary to the plausibility (and indeed to the intelligibility) of his argument.

In these circumstances we cannot do better than attempt a rough statement in our own language of the kind of view we have in mind. What its advocates would say to us is something like this: "The trouble with all forms of rationalism is that they represent religion as beginning in a conviction, whereas actually it begins rather in a perception. It begins, it is true, with the knowledge of God, but the knowledge here in question is not of the nature of a belief in His reality (no matter whether self-evident or reasoned) but is much rather a direct 'sensing' of Him, a direct and quasi-perceptual awareness of His presence. That is why all discursive arguments for the existence of God so often seem to the religious devotee to be completely out of place. A man needs no elaborate proof of the existence of that which he directly perceives." If now we press the question through which of our various senses the awareness of God's presence comes to us, the answer is very likely to be that the sense in question is not any of our "bodily senses" but is a special "spiritual sense." "Those who know God," writes Coventry Patmore, a very typical representative of this general way of thinking, "know that it is quite a mistake to suppose that there are only five senses."[1] Yet because a special terminology is lacking for this sixth sense, readiness is usually shown to employ the language of vision, of touch, and even of taste, in order to describe its working; and appeal is made to the traditional phraseology according to which the saint has been said to "hear God speak," to "see Him with the eyes of the soul," "to feel His presence," to "taste and see that He is good." And, as Patmore explains:

> "The 'touch' of God is not a figure of speech. 'Touch,' says Aquinas, 'applies to spiritual as well as to material things.' . . . A perfect life ends, as it begins, in the simplicity of infancy: it knows nothing of God on whom it feeds otherwise than by touch and taste. The fulness of intelligence is the obliteration of intelligence. God is then our honey, and we, as St. Augustine says, are His; and who wants to understand honey, or requires the *rationale* of a kiss? 'The beatific vision,' says St. Bernard, 'is not seen by the eyes, but is a substance which is sucked as through a nipple.'"[2]

These statements are very frequently supported by instancing such experiences of apparently immediate contact with the Divine as are catalogued in the chapter on "The Reality of the Unseen" in James' *Varieties*;[3] and mention may here be made also of the special hypothesis—closely connected, of course, with his general theory of religion as outlined in our preceding section—which James himself puts forward to account for such experiences. "It is," he says, "as if there were in the human consciousness *a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of* what we may call '*something there*,' more deep and more general than any of the special and particular 'senses' by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed."[4] Concerning which we need perhaps only remark that such an hypothesis, even if it were verified, could hardly be of any help in the explanation of religion; for, even if psychology ever did seem to indicate (what it cannot at present be held as indicating[5]) that the special senses which we now possess point back to a primordial *Gemeinempfindung* or 'general sensation' from which they have been gradually differentiated (and which might therefore, as James suggests, still survive in us as a sort of background), it would have to be admitted that what was thus an occasional and residual survival in the case of the human race would constitute the normal consciousness of the *amœba,* which would accordingly have to be recognised as the more religious of the two species!

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[1] *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower*, p. 43.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

[3] *Cf.* also R. H. Thouless, *Introd. to the Psychology of Religion*, ch. XVI.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

[5] *Cf.* Ward, *Psychological Principles*, pp. 108–115; G. F. Stout, *Manual of Psychology*, pp. 146–147.

The above will perhaps be recognised as a fair general account of a way of thinking which has enjoyed very wide influence among us. Yet if we take this view at its face value, it is not difficult to recognise its defects. We may mention three points.

In the first place, we must take objection to the conception of a 'spiritual sense.' From one point of view, the phrase is a redundant one, because all our senses are so far spiritual that they are the organs or vehicles by which our spirits apprehend the material world; while from another point of view it is purely a contradiction in terms, the things of spirit being other than the things of sense and not to be apprehended by sensible means. And the danger to which all perceptualist theories of religion are exposed is just that of obscuring the purely spiritual nature of the realities with which we have in this region to do. The distinction between the things of sense and the things of the spirit, and the resulting idea of the incorporeal, are among the most precious and most hardly won possessions of our Western culture. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were perhaps the first men in human history to realise quite clearly that the soul and God are something other than highly rarefied forms of extended substance. On this light the world has lived ever since their time, and yet never without imminent danger of relapse into earlier modes of thought. Within a generation of the death of the author of the *De Anima,* Zeno the Stoic was in the same city teaching that God and all other souls were composed of a special kind of matter—a kind of fire, in fact, or of fiery ether; and to this day is not a spirit conceived in the popular mind as something between a jelly-fish and a gas? Therefore we need to remind ourselves that to have knowledge of a spirit is not to see it, or to touch it, or to have any kind of sensible contact with it or sensible awareness of it, but rather to be in spiritual sympathy with it, to share its thoughts and feelings and to understand its purposes. As Herrmann excellently writes:

> "If God, in bringing Christ near to the individual soul, gives to that soul the full tidings of what is in God's heart, and if He thereby gives the soul

clear vision and peace, then He makes that soul feel His almighty power, and deals with such a soul in the most direct and intimate way possible. A more immediate contact of the soul cannot be conceived or wished for, save by those who do not think of their God as a Personal Spirit, but as an impersonal Substance. The Personal Spirit communes with us through manifestations of His inner life, and when He consciously and purposely makes us feel what His mind is, then we feel Himself."[1]

Second, we cannot but feel that all attempts to establish a special 'religious sense' or a directly and purely perceptual knowledge of the Divine run seriously counter to the very fundamental principle that in religion "we walk by faith, not by sight."[2] No effort to minimise or to supersede this element of *faith* that inheres in all our relations with God has ever been anything else than prejudicial to religion's highest interests. Faith is indeed the very glory and pride of the human spirit; its supreme prerogative; its noblest adventure. Being of the very essence of our human situation, it lends to human life and thought the greatest of all its charms—this faith that is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."[3] If Tennyson's "believing where we cannot prove" is a somewhat sophisticated account of our religious relationship to the transcendent world, "believing where we cannot *see*" is exactly the New Testament account of it. "For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."[4]

Finally, it must be said that a view such as we have sketched tends in a serious degree to obscure the *moral* nature of faith. It is well known how the neglect of the fundamental moral element in religion was the greatest of all the pitfalls that lay in wait for those schools of mysticism which stressed the immediate and quasi-perceptual character of the religious vision. Among them religion often seemed to be bound up not with social duty but rather with the sense of beauty. Defining religion as *aisthēsis,* as being essentially a matter of perception, they naturally correlated it with the 'æsthetic' rather than with the ethical. Instead of recognising it as an outreaching of man's ethical nature towards a Divine Goodness above and beyond him, they tended to regard it rather as a quasi-sensible contact with a Divine Substance. The result was a kind of æsthetic pantheism. "It is very certain," says von Hügel, "that Pure Mysticism and Pure Pantheism are one; and that they both, by their similar excesses, end by levelling all things down, not up."[1] And of course the trouble with all pantheism is just that it fails to take up into its religious outlook the moral consciousness of the distinction between good and evil.[2]

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[1] *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., 3d ed., pp. 184–185.

[2] II Cor. 5 : 7.

[3] Heb. 11 : 1.

[4] Romans 8 : 24–25. Professor D. C. Macintosh, in his *Theology as an Empirical Science* (1919), rightly sees that to regard religion as a perception of a Divine Object destroys the element of faith in religion, but finds no difficulty in making this sacrifice. "The data for a scientific theology," he writes, "must be the facts revealed in religious perception. For it is not enough to appreciate the divine qualities as ideal; there must be perception of the divine as real. What we mean here, or a part of it, is sometimes called 'faith'; but the term is objectionable, for the reason that as commonly used it connotes mere belief. On the contrary, the religious consciousness, at least at its best, involves experience and recognition of the religious Object, the Divine, as in some real sense present." (P. 106.)

We have mentioned mysticism, and the mention of it in this connection is natural, if for no other reason, at least for this one —that it is precisely to the mystical current in the religious tradition of the past that appeal is commonly made by the supporters of the perceptualist theory. Indeed it may be said to us: "Are not mysticism and the perceptualist theory one and the same thing? Is not this just what mysticism stands for—the doctrine that God may be apprehended by us in a more direct and immediate way than through the understanding, and in a way that can only be spoken of as vision, the *visio beatifica?*"

That there is some good reason for suggesting such an identification we should not deny. There is no doubt at all that a perceptualist theory of religious knowledge has been explicitly professed by many notable representatives of mysticism, and that the language of many more has been such as to lend it some support. It is well known that Ritschl understood mysticism in this sense and accordingly made it a central object of his attack, combating it, as has been well said, "with all his vigour, and almost with his latest breath, bringing to bear against it not only general arguments but vast historical studies."[1] And no doubt if we accept his view as to what mysticism is, it is true that "it cannot seriously be questioned that both experience and history afford corroboration of Ritschl's contention."[2]

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[1] *Essays and Addresses,* first series, p. 132.

[2] I quote from two very different writers criticisms passed on Schleiermacher's theory from this point of view. (1) "If we ask how Schleiermacher came to give such a meagre account of religious feeling, emphasizing what may be called the physical side of dependence on an infinite cause, to the neglect of the moral side, represented in the feeling of alliance with a voluntary power related spiritually to ourselves, we can hardly be wrong in tracing the origin of this defect to the influence of the philosophy of Spinoza, whose *cognitio Dei intuitiva* is nothing else than the reference of all finite phenomena to the necessary causality of God—that is, the feeling of our dependence upon it."—O. Pfleiderer, *The Development of Theology,* Eng. transl., p. 106. (2) "In Schleiermacher's famous reduction of religion to the feeling of dependence, he does not sufficiently emphasise the point that this dependence is conditioned by an activity, and that it appears at the limits of this activity. Nor does he make it sufficiently obvious that this dependence makes itself felt in the struggle for those values which appear to man to be the highest."—H. Höffding, *Philosophy of Religion,* Eng. transl., p. 115.

While not desiring to enter into any debate concerning either the connotation or the denotation of the term mysticism, and while fully recognising that the best expedient may well be to drop so equivocal and disputatious a term altogether from our vocabulary (remembering, for instance, that appendix to Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism* in which no less than twenty-six different definitions of it are collected), yet we are bound to call attention to the serious obstacles that lie in the way of any attempt to foist the perceptualist theory on all those schools and ways of religious thinking that have commonly been styled mystical. To begin with, we feel that mysticism, if it is anything, is the name not of a kind of theory but of a kind of piety, and stands rather for one historical variety of the phenomenon which it is the business of our science to interpret than for one of several alternative interpretations which may be given of that phenomenon. In order to avoid any confusion of this sort, some German writers have distinguished between *Mystik* and *Mystizismus,* making the former stand for a certain well-known current in our Western religious history, and the latter for the academic theory *about* religion which we are now discussing. The distinction might be represented in English as between *mysticism* itself and *the mystical theory of religion*—a way of speaking which would avoid this first difficulty. But there is a second difficulty which would hardly be avoided even by such an expedient as this. For it might with much reason be claimed that the historical phenomenon of mysticism is both a wider and a deeper thing than its occasional associations with a spurious perceptualism might seem to indicate, and that these associations are in reality to be regarded as representing something of a declension from its original purity, having their roots in a misunderstanding of its real purport. For instance, we find Dean Inge writing:

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[1] J. Oman, *The Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries*, p. 392.

[2] *Loc. cit.* Here is a Ritschlian definition of mysticism: "When the influence of God upon the soul is sought and found solely in an inward experience of the individual, that is, in an excitement of the emotions taken, with no further question, as evidence that the soul is possessed by God; without, at the same time, anything external to the soul being consciously and clearly perceived and firmly grasped, or the positive contents of any soul-dominating idea giving rise to thoughts that elevate the spiritual life, then that is the piety of mysticism."—Herrmann, *Communion with God.*, Eng. transl., 3d ed., pp. 22–23.

> "The mystic is not as such a visionary, nor has he any interest in appealing to a faculty above reason."[1]

And Professor Burnet, writing of the Socratic-Platonic mysticism, says:

> "The 'supercelestial' region is clearly identified with that of pure thought, and the forms the mind beholds in it . . . do not lend themselves in any way to crude pictorial fancies. It is true that our relation to this supreme reality can only be expressed in the language of feeling, but it is not by feeling we apprehend it when and in so far as we can so do. It is expressly said to be visible to the mind alone (μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ). There is no suggestion of a different way of knowing to which we may have recourse when reason and intelligence fail us. . . . *I suspect that all true mysticism is of this type, and that to set feeling above reason as a means of knowing is only a perversion of it.*"[2]

Indeed we may safely go further and say that in its most authentic manifestations—in Pythagoras, in Socrates and Plato, in Plotinus, in Erigena, in Bruno, in Spinoza[3]—mysticism has been much rather identified with intellectualism than with any sort of sentimentalism or romanticism.

We are thus led to suspect that the perceptualist theory of religious knowledge is based on nothing else than misunderstanding, and in particular on misunderstanding of the mystic's *façon de parler*. The mystic indeed can find no other language in which to express his apprehension of the Divine than the language of sense, and especially the language of vision. But the best mystics have always been anxious to have it well understood that this language was at best a makeshift, and was in large measure only metaphorical. They have indeed made it abundantly clear that there is here no question of a special sense or a special faculty of perception, or of any other activity of the soul than its own intelligence. The central contention for which mysticism stands is certainly that of the direct and intimate nature of God's presence to our souls, but it has also been of the very essence of its case that it is not to our *senses* that He is thus present but to our *thoughts*. That in our thoughts we can get closer to God than we can get to the things of sense by seeing and touching and tasting them—on that assurance all Platonism and Neo-Platonism rests. It is all summed up in Plato's own saying that God is indeed visible, but *visible to the mind alone;* and in the equivalent teaching of the later Platonism that God can be seen indeed, but only "*with the eyes of the mind*."[1] These latter words are taken from one of the great source-books of our Western mysticism—the *Corpus Hermeticum,* from which it may be worth our while here to transcribe a few typical passages:

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[1] *Christian Mysticism*, p. 19. *Cf.* also the same writer's *Faith and Its Psychology*, p. 55: "There are some who wish to keep the Faith-feeling uncontaminated by thought and will; who desire that it should remain a vague, mysterious apprehension of the infinite, an immediate intuition of the ineffable. It would be a mistake to include all the mystics under this class."

[2] *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, pp. 167–168. Italics mine.

[3] It may be objected that we are here naming academic philosophers rather than vision-blessed saints, but the truth is that mysticism has in general much more commonly appeared as the religion of philosophers and isolated thinkers than as a movement in the life of the people as a whole.

> "He manifests all things, but is not manifested; He is not Himself brought into being in images presented through the senses, but He presents all things to us in such images. It is only things which are brought into being that are presented through sense; coming into being is nothing else than presentation through sense. It is evident then that He who alone has not come into being cannot be presented through sense; and that being so, He is hidden from our sight.
>
> "But He presents all things to us through our senses, and thereby manifests Himself through all things, and in all things. . . . For thought alone can see that which is hidden, inasmuch as thought itself is hidden from sight; and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can He, being in Himself, be manifested to you through your bodily eyes? But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind, then, my son, He will manifest Himself to you. For the Lord manifests Himself ungrudgingly through all the universe; and you can behold God's image with your eyes, and lay hold on it with your hands."[2]

In another place:

> "For He cannot be known by hearing, nor made known by speech; nor can He be seen with bodily eyes, but with mind and heart alone."[3]

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[1] τοῖς τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμοῖς. [2] Walter Scott's translation, *Hermetica*, vol. I, p. 159.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 173. ὁρατὸς νῷ καὶ καρδίᾳ.

Once more:

> "And do you say 'God is invisible'? Speak not so. Who is more manifest than God? For this very purpose has He made all things, that through all things you may see Him. This is God's goodness, that He manifests Himself through all things. Nothing is invisible, not even an incorporeal thing; mind is seen in its thinking, and God in His working."[1]

Furthermore it may be noted that still another of the perils to which we found the perceptualist theory to stand exposed—the peril of obscuring the essentially ethical nature of all religious insight—is definitely avoided by all the more genuine varieties of mysticism; for these have taken pains to make it clear that God is not always visible even to the eyes of the mind, but only to the eyes of the *pure* mind—to the eyes, as we might put it, of the good conscience. Dean Inge indeed includes it as one of the four fundamental articles of all true mystical creeds that "Without holiness no man may see the Lord."[2] And Professor Walter Scott writes in the Preface to his great edition of the *Hermetica:*

> "If one were to try to sum up the Hermetic teaching in one sentence, I can think of none that would serve the purpose better than the sentence, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' "[3]

From among many passages which might be cited to prove the justice of this pronouncement a single sentence will suffice:

> "Men who love the body will never see the vision of the Beautiful and Good."[4]

From all this, then, it is abundantly clear that the perception and vision of God of which the mystics have spoken is not really a special pre-rational vehicle of knowledge parallel with and independent of the senses recognised by ordinary psychology; but is rather a highly refined product of thought and reason themselves; and as dependent as is the rest of our knowledge on impressions received through these senses. To refer our knowledge of God to a religious sense, or to religious vision, is thus in no sense to offer a solution of the problem of religious knowledge, but rather to render more imperative than ever the necessity of finding such a solution—that is to say, of analysing into its rational constituents this so-called religious sense. This state of the case has been very frankly recognised by a number of recent writers who have nevertheless continued to use the language of sense-perception for the delineation of religious insight. An example may be taken from Professor J. A. Robertson's treatment of "religious intuition":

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 223.

[2] *Christian Mysticism*, p. 8.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 418 f.

> "Glance for a moment at some of those higher senses which are formed in the sphere of the more purely intellectual activity. There is, for example, the much-talked-of common sense. . . . But common sense is really a name for a group of interrelated special senses which co-operate to produce sound judgments. We talk, for example, of a sense of proportion and perspective in life, and of a sense of values. And kin with these . . . is the sense of humour. . . . We venture to suggest that there is a spiritual common sense which belongs to religious intuition, a sensitiveness to the laws of the Unseen World. . . .
>
> "Religious intuition then is not any isolated phenomenon in human nature. It is part of the regular tendency of the mind to form higher senses, intuitive faculties, in every direction. . . ."[1]

For ourselves, we should find it preferable and less confusing, once these facts are clearly recognised, to cease altogether (at least in scientific discourse) to speak of a "religious sense"; just as students of ethics and æsthetics have long ago, and to their no small profit in added clarity of mind, ceased to speak of a "moral sense" and an "æsthetic sense." While, however, we should thus deprecate the use of the term "sense" and its derivatives in this connection, we feel a little differently about the term "perception." For there is undoubtedly a certain perceptive quality about the highest manifestations of religious insight. We agree with the Platonists that "the soul has a certain perceptive power of its own."[2] And this is indeed good logical doctrine. Perception is but another Latin word for intuition, and it has always been taught that there is an intuitive or perceptive element present in all knowledge, and not least in discursive reasoning. Perceptions, taught the Stoic logicians long ago, come from two sources—from sense and from reason; and those that come from reason are of two kinds—direct perceptions of ethical and æsthetic qualities, and perceptions that come 'by demonstration.'[3]

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[1] *Divine Vocation in Human Life*, pp. 222–224.

[2] ἔστι δὲ ψυχῆς αἴσθησίς τις.

[3] δι' ἀποδείξεως.

That is to say, we 'perceive' that a certain conclusion may be drawn from two premises. More recently Mr. Bradley has told us that "Inference is a construction followed by an intuition."[1] Perceptiveness, then, is no less a character of the highest and most difficult of the mind's rational processes than it is of its simplest awareness of sight and sound and extended form.[2]

The View that Religious Faith is Posterior to "Religious Experience".

VI

There is, however, still a third form in which the romanticist theology has lately appeared among us and to which brief reference must now finally be made. This is what has come to be known (though we begrudge it the exclusive right to such a name) as the "Theology of Experience." Like other forms of romanticism it places the seat of religion, behind and below all beliefs, in the pre-ideational region of our mental life; but it differs from them in that its magic formula is neither religious feeling nor religious sense but the much more indeterminate one of "religious experience." The contention is that there is no other way of substantiating our religious convictions and beliefs than by showing them to be deductions from experiences of a religious nature which precede them both in time and in authority and which alone constitute the real substance of religion. Our faith, we are told, is based upon our experience. We put our trust in the love of God because we have had experience of His love in our lives. We believe in the forgiveness of sins because we have had our own sins forgiven. We believe in prayer because our own prayers have been heard and answered.

It is once again instructive to take careful note of the particular form or aspect of rationalism against which the upholders of this view are reacting. They are reacting against the diametrically opposite notion that the beginning of religion in a man's life *follows* his acceptance of certain dogmas—which dogmas are not therefore regarded as arising within the religious consciousness itself but are held to be supplied to that consciousness from without; the sources of such external supply being twofold—

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[1] *Principles of Logic*, 1st ed., p. 235.

[2] "The fact surely is that the primary function of human reason is not the construction of chains of argument, but the recognition of truth."—L. Hodgson, *The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetics* (1925), p. 4.

tradition on the one hand and philosophic speculation on the other, 'revealed' and 'natural' theology. The schools had long tended to speak as if our religious beliefs *either* came to us ready-made from our elders and teachers, from the Church and its Sacred Writ, *or* were supplied by our metaphysical studies, and as if the soul's life with God could only begin when these beliefs had already been accepted. Lutheran orthodoxy, for instance, had taught that faith begins in the presentation to the mind of certain doctrines of revelation, that the next step is taken when the mind accepts these doctrines, and that only then can saving faith (that trust in God which is the essence of personal religion) take its rise within the soul. The three stages were called respectively *notitia, assensus,* and *fiducia.* And "the first element of faith is to be found even in heretics, the second only in the orthodox, and the third only in those who are born again. . . . Each succeeding step in the process always implies the preceding one, but the reverse does not hold good."[1]

Such a doctrine is of course not to be tolerated for a moment; and so far as the "Theology of Experience" stands, in common with Schleiermacher, for a protest against it, we must be in hearty sympathy with it. For it certainly cannot be too often repeated that the living and practical experience of religion need be preceded neither by the acceptance of ecclesiastical dogma on the one hand nor by the study of science and metaphysics on the other. But are we therefore faced with the sole alternative of believing that the living and practical experience of religion must be of such a nature as logically to precede the formation of all religious belief?

The answer lies in seeing that there is a third possibility open to us. We can have no religious experience prior to and independently of religious faith, nor yet can we have any faith prior to and independently of the practical experience of religion—because religion *is* faith, and there is no religious experience of which faith is not a constitutive part. So the attempt to penetrate behind the reflective activity of faith to some pre-ideational immediacy of contact with the Divine once more comes to grief. Whatever may be true of other experiences, of religious experience it must be said that it is itself essentially reflective in character—born of reflection and constituted by reflection. No being, it is granted, could be religious who could not *think;* and so far as we know or can guess, no being who can think is wholly without the germs of a religious consciousness. Therefore, seeing that thought consists in nothing else than the manipulation of ideas, it cannot be true, as Schleiermacher imagined and as this new school of romantics seems to follow him in believing, that "ideas are all foreign to religion." Perhaps, indeed, the main principle to be grasped in this whole matter is that religion lives not by sight but by insight. A man is religious not in so far as he stumbles on certain new facts but in so far as he discovers a new meaning in facts that are already known to us all.[1] And it is in this discovery, in this insight, that he comes into touch and commerce with the Unseen God. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."[2] Hence neither is it true to say with the "Theology of Experience" that religious belief is consequent upon religious experience, nor is it true to say with rationalism that religious experience is consequent on a prior act of belief; the truth being rather that the deepest of all religious experiences is just the experience of believing.[3]

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[1] Quoted from Quenstedt by Herrmann, *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., pp. 217 f.

Let us, however, before leaving the subject, consider one or two concrete examples of the kind of religious experience which has oftenest been appealed to by those who would make such experience logically prior to the emergence of belief. We may take first the experience of the forgiveness of sins. It is surely unmeaning to say that my belief that God forgives sin is an inference, drawn by later reflection, from my experience that He has forgiven my sins. For what could an "experience" of forgiveness be apart from faith in a forgiving God? Nay more, what is my experience of the forgiveness of sin but just the coming home to my individual heart of the Christian conviction that God is ever willing to forgive those who turn to Him in true repentance? The sense of relief and the other emotional accompaniments of the conviction are surely rather its results than its causes, the root of the whole experience being nothing else than my appropriation to myself, by faith, of the Gospel truth of forgiveness.

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[1] "Denn Glaube ist gerade das Innewerden, dass alle Erkenntnis etwas anderes meint, als sie selber gibt, etwas hinter ihr selbst, dass sie nur ein Hinweis ist auf etwas Urlebendiges, jenen Ursprung, der unser Freiseinkönnen und den Reichtum des Lebens erst möglich macht. Glaube stellt nicht ein religiöses Wissen neben das Weltwissen als ein Zweites. . . ."—Emil Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*, p. 127.

[2] I John 4 : 12.

[3] "All the possible religious experiences which a man may have are bound up with a believing attitude of his mind. . . . And we are left with the only view which is true to the religious consciousness, *viz.*, that the experience and the belief *are one*. To speak of them separately is to deal in abstractions, and to forget, in the unreality of theological jargon, what every Christian child knows, that religion is faith." (D. M. Baillie, "What is 'The Theology of Experience,' " in the *Expositor* for January, 1921.) In the whole of the present section I am greatly indebted to this paper of my brother's.

The other example we shall select is the experience of Divine consolation in time of sorrow. Can we then think of this experience as coming to a man prior to all belief—whether as to the meaning of suffering and its place in the Divine plan, or as to how it may finally be overcome and "overruled" for good? Surely not. Surely the solace that religion offers us is not a mere soothing and opiate influence that invades the soul in some mysterious way and stills our stormy questionings without answering them. Man is an intelligent being and will not—indeed *ought* not to—yield himself to the power of that kind of release. What the stricken man in his sorrow wants is a key to the riddle that confronts him; a clue which, in helping him, however dimly, to understand his loss, may enable him to accept it without bitterness. All other forms of comfort he will repudiate as "vacant chaff well meant for grain." But indeed God offers him no other. The only comfort God offers us is that which comes through the realisation of a great truth, a liberating Gospel. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If only we can by God's grace attain to the faith that behind this apparently so rough-and-tumble world, where our finite loves suffer such rude and bitter interruption, there nevertheless stands firm the Eternal Love of God, then what better solace need we ask? So we must not say that faith in the Divine consolation is originally inferred from our experience of it; for without faith we could not have experienced it. The conviction cannot follow on the experience, because the deepest thing in the experience itself is just the coming of the conviction.

Here finally is a word of Herrmann's on this whole matter:

> "That is the true presence of God in our hearts when we experience how the tidings He gives us through Christ place the world and our sin beneath

our feet. And this is the presence of Christ which we can *experience* in true communion with God, when His appearance in history comes home to our hearts as the most important thing in all the world. We Christians cannot experience any other presence of God and Christ, and we desire no other."[1]

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[1] *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., pp. 283 f.

CHAPTER IV

THEOLOGICAL INTUITIONISM AND THE "RELIGIOUS A PRIORI"

I

Intuitionalism in Theolog

OUR consideration of the opposing tendencies and claims of rationalism and romanticism now seems to point to at least one positive conclusion, namely, that religious faith, though in no sense to be identified with the speculations of scientific cosmology, is none the less to be regarded as a product of rational insight of another kind. And now the question is, What is this other kind of rational insight?

In the present chapter we shall deal with one possible answer which may be, and not infrequently has been, given to this question. There are those who tell us that the kind of rational insight with which we have here to do is a thing entirely by itself —entirely *sui generis*, as the old logicians would have said—and can therefore only be described as *religious* insight or (bringing an older word once more into currency) as *divination*. The fundamental affirmations of the religious consciousness are, according to this view, ultimate truths of reason which are intuitively apprehended and immediately evident. Thus religious knowledge is given a firm and independent foundation of its own; a foundation, that is to say, which is at the same time independent of natural science and yet no less firm than that on which natural science itself rests. It is, however, to be carefully noted that this advantage is not now held to accrue to religion in view of its possession of a special avenue of sensibility; but rather in view of its possession of a special set of self-evident judgments as the starting-points of its thinking.

The necessity of recognising the presence of such axioms in our thinking as a whole was first insisted on by Plato[1] and Aristotle.[2] These great teachers pointed out that since demonstration means the ability to see and to show that certain truths follow from certain other and prior truths, there must (if the fallacy of an infinite regress is to be avoided) be certain original or ultimate truths which do not themselves rest upon any demonstration but are immediately apprehended as true by the mind. These they termed "the starting-points of demonstration" or "axioms" or "the common beliefs." But it was the Stoics who first made bold to suggest that any specifically religious beliefs were included among these ultimate judgments or, to put the same thing in another way, that the religious consciousness was in possession of certain ultimate and self-evident axioms peculiar to itself. In Stoic terminology Aristotle's "common beliefs" became "common notions" (*koinai ennoiai, notitiæ communes*), or "presumptions" (*prolēpseis, præsensiones*), *i. e.*, necessary preconceptions of human thinking; and they were described as being natural to the human mind (*physikai ennoiai*) or innate (*emphutos, innatus*) and quite self-evidencing or "gripping" (*katalēptikos*). Included among these common notions were the judgments that God exists, that He is a living being, that He is eternal, and that He is well-disposed to man;[1] and it was upon these judgments that the Stoics believed all religion ultimately to rest.

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[1] See, *e. g.*, *Rep.*, book VI, 510–511.

[2] Especially in *Anal. Post.*, book II.

It is with this position—*that religion rests ultimately on certain intuitively apprehended and self-evident truths of a distinctively religious character*—that we are now to concern ourselves. Broadly speaking, it may be referred to as theological intuitionism. It was, on the whole, the prevailing theological theory in eighteenth-century England, being shared alike by both parties to the Deistic controversy. Open almost any technical theological work dating from the eighteenth century, or indeed from the latter part of the seventeenth, and you will find the margins or the foot-notes crowded with references to the writings of the Latin Stoics, and particularly to this strain in them.

The Idea of a "Religious a priori";
The Views of Troeltsch.

II

It is well known, however, that the question of the self-evident element in knowledge was placed on wholly new ground by the

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[1] *Cf.* Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, II, 1; II, 5; II, 17; Plutarch, *De Stoic. repugn.*, 38; Sext. Emp., IX, 33; Diog. Laert., VII, 147.

Critical Philosophy of Kant. There is hardly another chapter in the history of European thought that now seems so much a thing of the past as the seventeenth-eighteenth-century appeal, in the manner of the Stoic philosophy, to that "law of nature and reason" which was believed to lie at the root alike of science, of law and politics, and of morality and religion; and which expressed itself in each case in certain intuitively apprehended first principles. Yet this is not so much because it came so near to being destroyed by Hume as because it was reconstructed by Kant in so new a way, and apparelled by him in so new a dress, that it has veritably seemed to be a new creature.

In the pages of the *Critiques* we hear no longer of intuitions, but only of a priori categories and laws, the old intuitionism being replaced by an insistence upon the a priori elements in experience. In the first *Critique* Kant attempted to set forth the a priori constituents of our theoretic knowledge. In the second *Critique* he performed the same service for our practical knowledge—our knowledge of good and evil. When, however, he came to deal with religious knowledge, he recognised the case to be somewhat different. Religious knowledge he believed to be directly dependent on our knowledge of good and evil; a product, as he put it himself, of our practical reason. Accordingly he did not recognise the existence in religious experience of any new or separate a priori elements, but taught rather that the only genuinely a priori element in religion is the ethical element which lies deeply embedded within it. Thus Kant himself, though having some affinities with the old epistemological and ethical intuitionism, and being in these fields what has in certain quarters recently come to be called an "Apriorist," has no affinity at all with the old theological intuitionism and is in no sense an "Apriorist" in the field of religious faith.

It is only within our own generation that the "religious a priori" has made its bow to the public, and yet nobody who is anywise acquainted with current tendencies in German theology can deny that it has now won wide and distinguished adherence. "To-day," wrote Professor E. W. Mayer as long ago as 1912, "they are going out in far-stretching processions as if with staves and torches, to seek the religious a priori"; and he adds: "I confess I belong to those who, with Häring, Traub, Kaftan, Herrmann, and Wobbermin do not regard the exodus without some uneasiness."[1] It is generally granted that the most distinguished representative of the movement was the late Ernst Troeltsch, and it is particularly in the form which he gave to it that we propose to study the movement here.[2]

Troeltsch would be in full agreement with all we have said on the one hand about the essentially intelligent character of religion, and on the other about the impossibility of identifying it with cosmological speculation. He writes:

> "Whether there are other ways of reaching the object of religion or God, and whether it is possible with such other kinds of knowledge to support and strengthen the knowledge of religion, is a question by itself and one that does not fall within the scope of our present inquiry. For if there are such ways, they reveal in any case something other than the Deity which we meet in religious experience. We are here concerned only with the question how far knowledge of truth is contained in the religious consciousness itself."[3]

The work of answering this question Troeltsch believes to contain two quite distinct stages. The first stage he takes to consist in the construction of a purely empirical psychology of religion, that is to say, a mere amassment of the facts of religion without any regard to their significance or value or truth-content.[4] Such a psychology of religion he finds in the American school of James, Leuba, Starbuck, and Coe. Sooner or later, however, in our study of religion, we must raise the question as to the truth of the beliefs, and the validity or objectivity of the experiences which are thus brought to our notice. This brings us, according to Troeltsch, to the second stage in our inquiry, but it is a stage to which we cannot proceed until we have found some instrument by which to distinguish the true and valuable from the merely illusory and subjective. Empiricism must therefore now give place to rationalism; or, in less misleading language, religious psychology must now give place to religious epistemology. The task of epistemology is to find the rational within the phenomenal, the valid within the merely actual. In embarking on this task Troeltsch is for the most part content to take Kant for his guide. Kant, he says, defined "the true rationalism," the true epistemological method. In every sphere of experience it was his aim to distinguish, amid the limitless diversity of experience, the genuinely a priori rational elements; clearly to state them; and then to use them as an instrument of discriminative criticism. As for religion:

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[1] In the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1912, p. 60.

[2] Troeltsch's views are contained chiefly in the following writings of his: *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie in der Religionswissenschaft* (1905); *Das Historische in Kants Religionsphilosophie* (1904), pp. 20–37; *Das religiöse Apriori* in the second volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften*, pp. 754–768; *Wesen der Religion und der Religionswissenschaft* in the same volume, pp. 452–499 (reprinted from *Kultur der Gegenwart*).

[3] *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie*, p. 51. The last phrase reads, "in dem religiösen, subjektiven Zustand selbst."

[4] *Cf. supra*, pp. 140 f.

> "All this applies also to the science of religion. Here also Kant followed the same method as had commended itself to him in the theoretical knowledge of the natural sciences and anthropology. Here also he seeks, parallel to the laws of the theoretic reason, laws of the practical reason, fundamental laws of the ethical, æsthetic, and religious consciousness which are already present a priori in the elemental phenomena of these spheres, and which, when applied to the concrete diversity of the facts, give rise to these different manifestations of reason."[1]

And the modern study of religion must "follow in principle the way of Kant":

> "It must seek the a priori law of consciousness which finds expression in the phenomena of the religious life, for in this law it possesses the most ultimate ground attainable by science for the determination of the truth-content of religion, and therefore at the same time an instrument for the critical purgation and further development of the spontaneous psychological manifestations of religion."[2]

But though Troeltsch would follow Kant "in principle," he is not prepared to do so in detail. He is by no means satisfied with the manner in which Kant himself utilised the principle of the a priori, and especially he is not satisfied with the manner in which he applied it to the sphere of the religious consciousness. In more than one of his writings he carefully details the points of his own divergence from Kant. One notable point of divergence is that whereas Kant seemed to think it possible to offer a complete and, as it were, *closed* list or system of the a priori conceptions operative in each sphere of experience, Troeltsch argues that all such lists or systems can be provisional only, and are open to constant revision coming from new experience. The task of sifting the logically necessary from the great mass of the psychologically actual is one that never ends. It is just here that an empiricism like that of William James finds out the weak points of a formal rationalism like Kant's. When once we realise that psychology is the *Eingangsthor* to the theory of knowledge, we shall not claim for our systems of categories the finality that Kant claimed for his. A second important point of divergence is that Troeltsch will have none of Kant's tendency to represent the a priori elements in morality and religion as if they were the whole of morality and religion respectively. In the realm of the theoretic reason Kant did not make this mistake, but always insisted that the matter of experience was no less necessary to it than was the form. But when he comes to treat of the practical reason he seems to forget this. "It has constantly been remarked," says Troeltsch, "that the a priori of the practical reason is handled by Kant quite differently from that of the theoretic reason."[1] In the realm of morals he seems to speak as if the bare abstract formula of reason—the categorical imperative—were sufficient, by itself, and without uniting in any way with the actual desires arising from our concrete human constitution and situation, to determine the whole duty of man. In the realm of religion he seems to speak as if the bare thought of a moral order—"the recognition of our duties as divine commands"—were the whole legitimate content of historic religion. Clearly this is an inheritance from eighteenth-century rationalism and Deism. The truth is, however, that the ethical and the religious a priori are both alike abstractions from the realities themselves; and we must never attempt to substitute abstraction for reality.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

> "The religious a priori should serve only to determine the element of necessity in the empirical phenomenon, without trying to strip it bare; that is, it should serve to correct, in the light of this element of necessity, such confusions and one-sidednesses as may be present in the psychological actuality, but without trying to brush that actuality altogether aside."[2]

And that, after all, is what Kant, at his best, had in mind.

With these two suggested corrections of the Kantian method we may have much general sympathy. But there is another and even more important respect in which Troeltsch proposes to depart from Kant, and this brings us at once upon the real ground of debate. Troeltsch seems to follow Kant in making a deep-going distinction between the theoretic and the practical exercises of reason, and in referring religion, no less than morality, to the latter. In all his writings on the subject passages may be found in which mention is made of this fundamental binary distinction in the a priori elements of consciousness. "I have emphasised," he says in one place, "the distinction between the a priori of science and that of the ethical-religious-æsthetic forms of value-judgment";[1] the distinction, as he puts it elsewhere, between "theoretic logic and the practical logic of the ethical, æsthetic, and religious";[2] or once more, and untranslatably, "between *die naturwissenschaftlich-kausalgesetzliche Vernunft* and *die geschichtswissenschaftlich-wertgesetzliche Vernunft*."[3] Yet, in spite of this willingness to follow Kant in including morals and religion under the single rubric of the practical reason, he refuses altogether to follow him in his close linking-up of religion with the moral consciousness. Kant, as is well known, held the knowledge of God to be a product of the conscience, an outgrowth of our knowledge of good and evil. Delve down to the heart of religion, he said, and you will indeed find an a priori, but it is the ethical a priori you will find—the categorical imperative of duty. Thus, as has been said already, he did not recognise any *separate* religious a priori. To Troeltsch this betokens a narrow moralism. It is a relic of eighteenth-century rationalism. It is a failure to recognise the independent rights of religion. He writes:

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 44. See also *Das Historische in Kants Religionsphilosophie*, pp. 25 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45. Somewhat freely rendered.

> "The Kantian theory of religion rests upon the Deistic psychology of morals and religion; which had taken the conjunction (common enough in experience) of moral perceptions with religious feelings to be the sole basis of the philosophy of religion; and had straightway, after the fashion of eighteenth-century psychology, translated this conjunction into intellectual reflections. Kant took over this psychology of religion without criticising it, and built upon it his fundamental law of the religious consciousness; so that he finds operative in religion a synthetic judgment a priori which arises out of the moral experience of freedom and constrains us to conceive the world as subject to freedom's ends. That, however, is a very one-sided orientation of the analysis of religion in the light of its ethical elements alone, and a very violent translation of the religious states of mind into reflections. . . . This, then, is where works like that of James can strike in. Religion as the special category or form of those psychic

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[1] *Zur Frage des religiösen Apriori*, p. 762.

[2] *Psychologie u. s. w.*, p. 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

states which result from the more or less dimly apprehended presence of the Divine in the soul—the sense of the presence and reality of the Superhuman and Infinite—that is, beyond all doubt, a far truer starting-point for the analysis of the rational a priori of religion."[1]

This criticism of the Kantian theology is of quite central importance for the understanding of Troeltsch's whole position; for it is precisely on this dissolution of the constitutive connection, so insisted upon by the founder of the Critical Philosophy, between the ethical and the religious spheres of experience, that the very existence of the school of the religious a priori depends. The real question is whether Troeltsch and his associates are right or wrong in parting company with Kant at this point and seeking for a new set of a priori categories that are specifically and exclusively religious. This question we must now face for ourselves.

Criticism of these III Views.

Troeltsch is undoubtedly deserving of our very profound respect as being one of the comparatively few contemporary writers on theology who have offered us a clear and self-consistent analysis of the nature of religious knowledge. And yet we are not satisfied. There is a doubt which again and again suggests itself to our minds, and which in the end turns out to be very closely related to the general dissatisfaction which we feel with his theory as a whole—the doubt, namely, whether he has any real right to appeal to Kant in support of it. After all, are not the resemblances between his theory of religious knowledge and Kant's very much on the surface? And is not the radical modification which he proposes to introduce into the Kantian system really destructive of the whole spirit of it?

It is somewhat puzzling, to begin with, that Troeltsch should be willing to follow Kant in making a fundamental binary division of our rational consciousness into theoretical and practical and in assigning religion to the practical sphere, and yet refuse to follow him in finding any constitutive connection between religion and morality. For what did Kant mean by the practical exercise of reason but just its exercise in the moral life? And what did he intend by claiming that faith was grounded in the practical exercise of reason but just that the moral consciousness was its only organ of insight? Troeltsch, indeed, will not have it so. He reproaches the Ritschlian theologians for speaking as if Kant had emphasised the practical character of religion in order thereby to bring out its validity, whereas what he really desired to bring out was merely its independence of speculation:

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[1] *Psychologie u. s. w.*, pp. 34–36.

> "For Kant the only issue which rests upon the practical character of religion is the separation of religion from theoretic science with its exact conclusions; and not its claim to be true. The latter claim rests rather on the rational—*i. e.*, the transcendental a priori law which religion contains. . . . This is precisely what is not realised by the Value-judgment Theology which makes appeal to Kant. In placing the whole emphasis on the separation of theoretic and practical reason, and in never stressing anything but the practical indispensableness of the values which religion claims, this theology loses sight of the necessity of the object to which these values attach, and falls into the abyss of Wish-theology or Illusion-theology. Kant himself, on the other hand, always laid stress on the necessity of the a priori religious reason and the object therein postulated."[1]

Yet surely there can be little question that in this matter the Ritschlians are the better Kantians of the two. It is difficult to see how Troeltsch can deny that Kant sought to defend the truth of religion by establishing its necessary connection with our consciousness of good and evil, or that the recognition of this connection is the very corner-stone of his theological theory.

And indeed, although the phrase "religious a priori" looks at first sight so Kantian, no phrase could really be less in accord with the spirit of the Kantian system, or more calculated to bring chaos and confusion into its leading principles. The cardinal contention in the interest of which the whole labour of the Critical Philosophy was undertaken by Kant was the contention that natural science does not really exhaust our verifiable knowledge of reality, because in our knowledge of good and evil we have available to us another and equally indisputable revelation of truth. Nor did Kant merely assert this to be the case, but rather devoted his whole life to the demonstration of it. And there is neither value nor avail in Troeltsch's assertion that there is still a *third* door open to us by which we may independently approach reality, until and unless he offers a like demonstration. Yet we find in Troeltsch no such "deduction of the categories" of the religious consciousness, nor even, if the truth be told, any indication as to what these categories or a priori elements are. Indeed we may go further than this and express the doubt whether Kant's great championship of a twofold avenue of knowledge is not actually stultified and rendered nugatory by this attempted addition of a third. We may recall, for instance, the famous passage in the concluding section of the second *Critique:*

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 27–28.

> "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within.* I have not to search for them and merely conjecture their existence as though they were veiled in darkness and were in a transcendent region beyond my circle of vision; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. *The former* begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges the connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems upon systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. *The second* begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which can be apprehended only by the understanding, and with which I discern myself to be not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection—as I am therefore also with all those visible worlds."[1]

Kant's only question with reference to religion was this: Along which of these two ways does religious conviction come to a man? And we may well feel that that is the only question that has any meaning. When Kant tells me that the fundamental affirmations of religion can be vindicated by reference to my a priori consciousness of good and evil, I immediately recognise the great value of such a proof, if indeed it can be adduced. But when Troeltsch tells me that they can be vindicated by reference to "the religious a priori," I feel that this is but *obscurum per obscurius explicare.* Thus the reference to Kant, instead of making us hopeful of Troeltsch's enterprise, rather increases our scepticism as to the possibility of its success.[2]

Indeed it must be said that the whole method of stating the problem which is common to Troeltsch and all the other advocates of the "religious a priori" seems to be radically at fault.

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[1] *Werke*, ed. Rosenkranz, vol. VIII, pp. 312–313. The above translation is based on Abbott's.

[2] *Cf.* E. W. Mayer, *loc. cit.*, pp. 60–66.

They speak as if to raise the epistemological question with reference to any realm of human experience were the same as to ask, 'What specific a priori rational principles does it contain?' This, however, is to beg the very question at issue in a sense in which it is never begged in Kant's pages. What if there be no specific a priori principles contained within the realm of experience in question? What if its fundamental principles are not epistemologically ultimate, or irreducible, or self-evident? What if they turn out to be derivable from still more ultimate principles which are by no means peculiar to this particular realm of experience but are recognisable elsewhere also?

This, as is well known, Kant actually held to be the case with regard to religion. And however frequently we may feel ourselves obliged to dissent from Kant's theological deliverances, we do at least feel it necessary to follow him in this fundamental respect. Surely he is entirely wise both in affirming that there are certain ultimate ethical principles which are genuinely self-evident, and in denying that there are any specifically theological propositions for which a similar claim can be made. There are, undoubtedly, certain basic principles of our moral natures which stand in need of no proof and are susceptible of none—which are as little requiring or capable of being supported by prior evidence as are the Law of Sufficient Reason and the Law of Universal Causation and whatever other laws are recognised by logicians to lie at the roots of our scientific knowledge. But even the most elementary of our religious beliefs are felt to stand in need of some kind of further evidence and substantiation, and are entirely capable of being doubted if such support does not appear. A self-evident proposition is defined as a proposition the contradictory of which is not rationally conceivable; and of what article in our religious creed could we claim that to be true?

Thus it is that Hume, who in his own way recognised this state of the case quite as clearly as did Kant, begins his *Natural History of Religion* by insisting that "the first religious principles must be secondary." And Höffding expresses the same truth in only slightly different terms when he writes that "religious values are secondary in comparison with other values"[1] and that "discussion is always led back by implacable logic to the conceptual priority of ethics over religion."[1] Our fundamental moral values are given to us directly, and intuited by us directly; but for everything in religion that goes beyond this direct intuition of moral value, there is required the activity of *faith.*

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[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 243.

There is indeed no doubt at all that Kant was at fault in his frequent tendency to interpret the organic relation of religion to the moral consciousness in such a way as to make the former appear a mere appendix to the latter. Nor is there any doubt that the morality with which he thus brought religion into connection was conceived by him in a narrow and rigoristic way. In these respects we may well follow Troeltsch. But where we cannot follow him is in respect of any attempt or tendency on his part to loosen the bonds which Kant forged so strongly between the life of duty and the life of faith.

IV

The Views of Professor Otto.

Some special mention must now, however, be made of the views of another notable representative of the "religious a priori," Professor Rudolf Otto, and especially of his book, *Das Heilige,* which has been translated into English under the title of "The Idea of the Holy" and has enjoyed an unusually wide repute. The references in Professor Otto's earlier writings to the "religious a priori" were very much after the manner of Troeltsch, but in this new work a number of very important differences emerge—differences which were no doubt present from the beginning in a latent way. These differences are probably largely due to the fact that Professor Otto does not base himself, as does Troeltsch, directly on Kant's own philosophy, but rather on that of the little-read Kantian thinker Jakob Fries, who departed from, or developed, the principles of his master sufficiently to lead him to publish in 1807 a *New Critique of Reason.* The most effective way of expounding and criticising Professor Otto's theological teaching would therefore be to begin by expounding and criticising the Friesian philosophy. That philosophy, however, is far too difficult and obscure to permit any proper investigation of it in this place, and we must be content to take what Professor Otto says at its own face value, and as a whole by itself, and criticise it accordingly.

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[1] *Op. cit.,* p. 330.

While Troeltsch had for the most part contented himself with merely insisting upon the existence somewhere in religion of an a priori element, Professor Otto has the merit of clearly informing us what this element is. It is the idea of the holy or of the sacred. It may be asked whether this is not rather a moral category, holiness being but another name for perfect goodness. In answer to this query Professor Otto allows that the tendency of religious history has been in the direction of an ever closer *rapprochement* between holiness and goodness, but insists that in their essential meaning the two ideas are utterly different. Originally, holiness had nothing to do with goodness, and to this day the deepest and most characteristic element in the idea of holiness is an element of a completely non-moral kind. The fact is, he explains, that in the conception or category of holiness there are two distinct elements—a rational and a non-rational. When we nowadays think of God, the Holy One, there are contained in our thought of Him certain definitely "rational" and "conceptual" predicates like spirit, reason, will, unity, almightiness, and so forth, and especially certain ethical attributes which would be summed up in the concept of infinite goodness or perfection. But deep down in the meaning of the word holiness, or rather deep down in the experience that lies behind the use of the word, and altogether below the level of conceptual thinking, there is an element of a wholly different kind. This is the "non-rational" element in religion, and it is a thing quite by itself. It is not ethical; it is not æsthetic; it is nothing but just religious—a sense of the holy or sacred as such. It is held that by means of our religious consciousness we are aware of an aspect of reality which is at once "mysterious," "terrible," and "fascinating"—a *mysterium* which is at the same time *tremendum* and *fascinans*. All these words have now become more or less broadened and diluted in their meaning, but originally they stood for experiences that were quite characteristic and *sui generis*, and we can still feel the reflex of these experiences to be present in their meaning in no small degree. To the element in reality to which we are thus pointed Professor Otto gives the name of *the numinous*. The corresponding emotion which it calls forth in the human breast is represented in different languages by different words, but in German the best word to describe it is perhaps *Schauer*, and in English *awe*. And Professor Otto accordingly claims that the emotion of awe is a thing quite by itself, indefinable, irreducible psychologically to any simpler elements, and historically quite underivable and "unevolvable."[1] We can best understand what is meant by recalling to our minds this numinous emotion as it once existed in original purity—the *Urschauer*, the primeval sense of awe, the sense (we might almost say) of "spookiness,"[2] which we find in savage religion before the processes of rationalisation and moralisation first set in and which we ourselves may still feel (for example) at the mention of the possible presence of a ghost.

So much, then, for the non-rational element in religion. Let us now turn to the rational element. Though Professor Otto always insists that it is the presence of the non-rational or numinous element that alone gives to religion its peculiar character and value, yet he at the same time teaches that the forward movement of religion from its crudest to its noblest forms mainly consists not in the development or heightening of its numinous character as such but in an ever-increasing closeness of association between the numinous and the rational or ethical. In other words, as religion advances, holiness gradually becomes more and more bound up with moral goodness. This process is described in Kantian language as the "schematisation of the category" of holiness. We read:

> "As it is with the feeling of moral obligation, so it is with the feeling of the numinous. It is a qualitatively unique feeling-content, derivable from no other feeling, and in that sense not 'evolvable.' But it is nevertheless a feeling-content which has numerous correspondences with others and which accordingly can both call these others up into consciousness and be called up into consciousness by them."[3]

Moreover such correspondences are no mere chance "associations of ideas" but are rather "necessary connections according to principles of inward and rightful relationship and mutual affinity."[4] Here an analogy is offered for our help:

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[1] "unentwickelbar." *Cf.* also "Es gibt keinen Gradübergang von natürlicher Befremdung zu dämonischer Befremdung,"—*Das Heilige*, 9th ed., p. 31.

[2] Otto himself appeals to the German phrase "Es spukt hier!"

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

[4] "nach Prinzipien innerer rechtmässiger Verwandtschaft und Zugehörigkeit," p. 59.

> "The intimate permeation of the rational elements in religious feeling by the weft-yarn of the non-rational may be illustrated by means of another familiar case of the permeation of a universal human feeling by an utterly non-rational and separate element, *viz.*, the permeation of personal affection by sexual desire."[1]

This gradual process of the "rationalising, ethicising, and humanising" of the original and purely numinous idea of holiness may be traced throughout the whole course of Old Testament history, until it finally completes itself in Jesus' thought of God as a righteous and loving Father. Yet even in the religion of Jesus the non-rational or numinous factor still persists; and can be seen, for instance, in the apocalyptic strain in His conception of the Kingdom of God. For although the best religion is that which is most rational and ethical, yet religion must not be so rationalised and moralised that it altogether ceases to be itself.

The holy, as we now know it, is thus essentially a "complex category," compounded of the non-rational element of sacrosanctity and the rational element of goodness. The fact that it is thus composite does not, however, prevent it from being regarded as a category, because "in respect of both elements alike it is purely a priori"[2] and is also a priori in respect of the conjunction of the two elements. More fully:

> "Both the rational and the non-rational elements in the complex category of the holy are a priori elements. And the latter are equally so with the former. Religion goes not out to vassalage, whether to Telos or to Ethos, and does not live on postulates. . . . Thirdly, and finally, the same is true of the *conjunction* of the two elements—of the inward necessity of their relationship. The histories of religion are in the habit of reporting the gradual mutual interpenetration of these elements and the process of the ethicising of the Divine as if these things were, in some sort, a matter of course. And they *are* a matter of course for that feeling which is inwardly aware of its own necessity. Yet this very self-evidence which attaches to these processes is itself a problem, and one which we cannot possibly solve without the supposition of a dim a priori knowledge of the essential and necessary relationship of the two elements. For this relationship is in no sense *logically* necessary. How could it possibly follow logically from the still barbarous half-demonic nature of a Moon-god or a Sun-god or a local *numen* that he should become a guardian of the oath, of good faith, of the validity of contracts, of hospitality, of the sanctity of the marriage tie, and of racial and tribal loyalties?"[3]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 167–168.

V

Criticism of these Views

Such, in a very brief statement of it, is Professor Otto's position. Its brilliant originality cannot be denied, and the very honest effort it makes to exhibit religion in its own native colours cannot but be refreshing to those who have been accustomed to have it portrayed to them as a grey and faded stepsister of philosophy. Nevertheless there is no doubt that there are a number of extraordinarily puzzling features about the construction that is here offered for our acceptance.

To begin with, there is Professor Otto's most baffling conception of the "non-rational" element in our experience and in the reality to which our experience introduces us. A closer acquaintance with the Friesian philosophy might indeed be of some assistance to us at this point, and yet it is difficult to believe that what Professor Otto says regarding it is really the fruit of very profound thought. He defines the rational element in reality as that element in it which can be "expressed in clear and definite concepts and is accessible to thought, to intellectual analysis, and to definition";[1] or again as "that in it which comes within the clear comprehension of our power of conceiving and belongs to the realm of familiar and definable conceptions."[2] But all we are told of the nature of the non-rational is that "beneath this realm of perfect lucidity there lies an obscure deep which is not accessible to our power of conceiving, and which is therefore called 'the non-rational.' "[3]

What is this obscure deep, this *dunkle Tiefe?* We are reminded at once of the pre-rational depths of the soul, the primordial religious feeling or sensation, to which we found the romantics making appeal; and we are accordingly led to ask whether by the non-rational element in reality Professor Otto does not simply mean that element in it which is supposed to be grasped by mere feeling, by mere sensation, as distinct from that element in it which can be grasped by thought. This is the sense in which Professor Otto has been understood by a number of his readers, who have accordingly classified him *simpliciter* as an advocate of a "special religious sense."[4] That there is much to justify this interpretation cannot be denied. The numinous element in experience is usually referred to by Professor Otto either as a "feeling" or as an "emotion," but it is a feeling or emotion which is *cognitive,* which indeed "issues from the soul's own deepest source of cognition";[1] and therefore it might more justly be referred to as a sensation—perhaps as "an eerie sensation of being in the presence of something at once mysterious, aweful, and fascinating."[2] Yet we are given pause when we remember that our cognition of the numinous is said to be a priori; for what could possibly be meant by an a priori *sensation,* seeing that sensation is of the very essence of the a posteriori? We are reminded also of the frequent reference to the indefinable nature of this numinous element in reality, and are led to wonder whether it would not in the end be truer to Professor Otto's real intention if we took him as pointing to the presence in religion not of a specific sensation so much as of an indefinable or ultimate idea. But in truth, as Professor Leonard Hodgson has pointed out, "there seem to be two strands in the texture of his definition; according to one, anything which cannot be defined is non-rational; according to the other, the mark of the non-rational is that it produces in the mind an emotion and not a concept."[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[4] He is so classified, for instance, by Professor W. P. Paterson in his Gifford Lectures on *The Nature of Religion*, pp. 169 ff.

Another very baffling aspect of Professor Otto's theory is his apparent equation of the rational with the *ethical.* He speaks almost indifferently of the "rationalisation" and the "moralisation" of the idea of God. In itself this is indeed not a matter of difficulty for us, for we ourselves would undoubtedly hold with Kant that morality is a product of our rational nature. But it is exceedingly difficult to see how such a recognition of the fundamentally rational character of our moral consciousness can fit into a theory like Professor Otto's. That the characteristic element in religion should be non-rational, while morality should be characteristically rational—that is a combination of views for which it seems impossible to conceive any justification. Surely if the sense of the numinous is to be called non-rational, the sense of moral obligation should be called non-rational too. Surely that "respect" for the moral law of which Kant spoke, and the sense of guilt after wrong-doing, are experiences at least as ultimate and underivable as the sense of awe before the holy thing. And the curious thing is that, in its own place, Professor Otto seems to admit this, and even to insist upon it as a help towards his own position. Our numinous experiences, he tells us, "point back to a hidden and independent source of ideas and feelings, just as do Kant's 'pure conceptions of the understanding' *and our moral and æsthetic ideas and valuations*";[1] and in a passage already quoted we read that "*As it is with the feeling of moral obligation,* so is it also with the feeling of the numinous. It is a qualitatively unique feeling-content, derivable from no other feeling. . . ."[2] We cannot therefore help feeling with Professor Hodgson that our author "seems to waver between holding that moral thought is rational and non-rational."[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

[2] L. Hodgson, *The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetics*, p. 7.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

However, our real difficulty with Professor Otto's theory of religion lies much deeper than any or all of these obscurities and is apparently quite independent of them. It lies in the view, which he shares with Troeltsch, that the deepest and most characteristic element in religion is in its own nature quite unethical. Already in dealing with Troeltsch we have formulated our objections to this view, but something more must be said about the special features presented by this new statement of it.

Professor Otto, as a good defender of the "religious a priori," sets out with the thesis that the connection between religion and morality is of an essentially secondary kind, the deepest element in religion being quite non-moral in character. Having thus at the beginning entirely separated two entities which in our common experience are so almost indistinguishably fused into one, he appears during the remainder of his book to be almost torturing himself with the effort to bring the two together once more. He has resort to the most complicated of devices. We are introduced to the very baffling conception of a composite category, made up of a rational and a non-rational element, both of which are, however, a priori in themselves and are a priori also in respect of their conjunction. We are told that though the characteristic and constitutive element in religion is indeed entirely non-moral, yet it stands in the most intimate possible of a priori relationships to the moral consciousness. The purely axiomatic nature of this relationship is indeed in many places as handsomely recognised as Kant himself could desire. It is true that Professor Otto will not allow that the relationship realises itself until a comparatively late period in the religious development of the race, but he insists that once it *is* realised, "it is immediately understood to be a matter of course of the plainest and most obvious kind."[1] He points out that when Amos declares to Israel that Yahweh is righteous, he offers no proof or justification of this statement, but takes it rather as a truth which needs only to be stated in order to be accepted as self-evident. And he adds:

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 142. Italics mine. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 58. Italics mine. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

> "It is an experience familiar enough to missionaries. When once the ideas of the unity and goodness of the Divine are given expression to and understood, they often take hold with astonishing rapidity, if the hearers possess any religious susceptibility at all."[2]

Yet it is strenuously denied that there is any kind of logical necessity about this identification of holiness with goodness. From the original idea of God as numinous it could not possibly, we are told, "follow logically" that He is righteous. And the fact that these two elements, in themselves so utterly diverse, should yet come to be conjoined in such a manner that their conjunction appears quite self-evident, is described as "the most surprising circumstance in the history of religion."[3] Moreover although the development of the numinous element in religion is asserted to be an entirely separate process from the progressive moralisation of religion, yet it is admitted that the two processes *almost* keep pace with one another.[4]

It is difficult to escape the impression that Professor Otto has wilfully brought all this trouble upon himself. The conception of a complex category, half rational and half non-rational, but a priori in respect both of both its parts and of the conjunction of these parts; the conception of a thought-connection which is immediately self-evident and yet is entirely devoid of logical necessity; the "most surprising circumstance in the history of religion" that a Being who began by being wholly non-moral should finally come to be thought of as the arch-guardian of all our *mores;* the splitting up of the thread of religious progress into two utterly distinct and unrelated processes which yet "nearly but not quite" synchronise with one another; and finally the strange paradox that, while the more we rationalise and moralise our religion the better do we make it, yet by rationalising and moralising it *completely* we should utterly destroy it—all these are difficulties which can only be solved by letting go altogether the radical distinction between the numinous and the ethical and allowing to our knowledge of good and evil an *entrée* into the very holy of holies of our religious faith.

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[1] "es immer zugleich als einfachste, *einleuchtendste* Selbstverständlichkeit verstanden wird." (P. 168.)

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 170.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

[4] "nicht ganz aber fast gleichzeitig." (P. 138.)

To do this need not, of course, be in any sense to *identify* religion with morality. Religion differs from morality, obviously, in that it has to do not with the ideal merely but with the real. Hence it makes use, in some sort, *both* of the categories of the moral consciousness *and* of the categories by which we apprehend the world of fact. The form of religious knowledge is thus indeed, as Professor Otto says, a composite form; but its parts are not the moral consciousness on the one hand and a uniquely religious consciousness of the numinous on the other. On the contrary, it is not until we have the two parts in relation to one another that the characteristically religious or "numinous" element is present at all; and the two parts are rather the moral consciousness on the one hand and our *consciousness of the real world* on the other. There is therefore no such thing as a "religious a priori"; which is the same as to say that no specifically religious doctrine can be regarded as strictly self-evidencing and epistemologically primary—a conclusion which surely commends itself to our common sense.

And the same would be true with regard to the characteristic religious emotions; for the emotions must take their colour from that which moves them. Professor Otto has indeed nowhere rendered a more welcome service than in the skill with which he has delineated and analysed the nature of religious awe and fear, and yet at the crucial point we cannot entirely accept his analysis. Instead of awe we should prefer to speak of *reverence* as the most comprehensive of religious emotions; and though we should indeed hold that it is blended of two strains, and should hold one of these strains to be the respect and love for that which is good, we should hold the other to be not any feeling in itself and already religious but rather the feeling aroused in us by *power*, by that which holds us in its grasp and has dominion over us. In other words, when we recognise that the power in whose hands our fate ultimately lies is worthy of our respect or admiration or love, then we feel towards it the characteristically religious or "numinous" emotion of reverence.[1] There can thus be no more talk of a special and uncompounded religious emotion than of a special and uncompounded religious category of thought.

It is a good thing, surely, to be able to feel that there are no obscure depths in our souls which the simple love of goodness cannot fathom, nor any dark mysteries in the Godhead to which it cannot furnish even the beginning of a clue.

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[1] Or perhaps the matter is more complicated still. "Suppose that the power that excites awe is also one that we have reason to regard as beneficent, one that, while capable of annihilating us in a moment, yet works for our good, sustains and protects us, one that evokes our gratitude. Awe then becomes compounded with gratitude and we experience the highly compound emotion of *reverence*. Reverence is the religious emotion *par excellence*."—W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, 16th ed., p. 132.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION AS GROUNDED IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS OF VALUE, AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

Faith & Reason on Moral Insight.

I

We must now be fairly well aware of the general direction in which we have been led, gradually but inevitably, by our criticism of the numerous conflicting theories which have passed under our review. On the one hand there are the rationalists, who would have us identify religion with cosmological theorising. On the other hand there are the romanticists and sentimentalists, who would find its real essence to consist in some felt stirring of the soul which precedes and is independent of every kind of thought and idea. These two opposite readings of religion hold something like an even balance against one another in contemporary theological literature, and in a sense they may be taken as serving to destroy one another, or at least radically to confute and correct one another's errors. It is indeed very difficult to say where the honours of the controversy should at present be held to lie. Each theory contains a characteristic element of insight which the other entirely ignores, and each in its turn falls into a characteristic error which the other successfully avoids. Rationalism seems to be right in believing religious insight to be a product of intelligent reflection, but wrong in supposing it to be therefore of one piece with scientific cosmology. And conversely, romanticism seems to be right in essaying to find a foundation for religion deeper down in the soul than all speculative theory, but wrong in looking for such a foundation below any and every kind of thinking. Thus as we read the writings of the rationalists we find ourselves wondering whether any but philosophers are truly religious, while as we read the writings of the romanticists we find ourselves wondering why exactly the lower animals are not religious as well as we; and we long for some theory which shall explain to us why it is that, in fact, only thinking beings seem to be religious, while on the other hand the philosopher, regarded as such, does not seem to be any more religious than the ordinary man.

Our conclusion can only be that religion, though indeed it is grounded in our nature as thinking beings, is yet grounded in some other kind of thinking than that which the scientist and metaphysician have in greater perfection than the rest of us. What then can this other kind of thinking be? One widely canvassed possibility is that the knowledge which is necessary to religion is immediately given to all rational beings in the form of self-evident truths which may be intuitively apprehended without the aid of any discursive process. This possibility, however, we have felt obliged to reject; finding it impossible to believe that any truth capable of serving as a basis for religion can be regarded as genuinely self-evidencing in character; and being sensible also of the paradox involved in thus making religion an entirely separate compartment of our spiritual life, and especially of the difficulty of so entirely separating it from our nature as *moral*.

It must next be noted that this last-mentioned difficulty—the difficulty, that is to say, of countenancing any theory of religion which fails to take proper account of its organic relation to the conscience—is one which we have felt in some degree obliged to press against almost every theory we have so far considered. A main difficulty with rationalism was its apparent inability to account for the sense of obligation attaching to beliefs recognised as genuinely religious in character. A main difficulty with romanticism was its apparent failure to give due weight to the fact that the vision or feeling of the Divine, on the reality of which it so much insists, is a vision or feeling that comes only to the pure in heart. And a main difficulty with the conception of a specific "religious *a priori*" is its inevitable tendency to set the religious and the ethical factors in our experience merely in *juxtaposition*, instead of in organic relationship.

We thus seem to be left with the sole alternative of believing that the kind of intelligent or rational insight in which religion takes its rise is none other than *moral* insight, and that faith in God is thus in some sort an outgrowth of our consciousness of value. This is the view which we propose to defend.

It will be remembered how, in our preliminary attempt to 'isolate' the phenomenon of faith, we found it to emerge primarily as an unknown residual factor in certain situations of the human spirit, appearing variously (according to the circumstances) as a sense of 'protest' or of 'trust' or of 'sympathetic response.' What we now submit is that in all these cases it is our *moral* nature that is making itself felt, and that the unknown residual factor is therefore nothing else than what has been called "the whisper of our values."[1]

In order to avoid misunderstanding, it may be well to make a few preliminary observations concerning the meaning that is here to be attached to the terms morality and value. *Morality* is, of course, to be understood in its widest (which is, to be sure, its only proper) sense. In some modern writings the word has been taken more narrowly, being made to signify one particular (and not altogether praiseworthy) attitude to life rather than the art of living in general; and to anybody who has this usage in mind the declaration that all religious faith emanates from the *moral* consciousness must look both like an elementary historical solecism and like an attempt seriously to curtail the scope of religious aspiration. There is, however, no possible excuse for such a usage,[2] and in the discussion which follows the moral consciousness will be understood as including the awareness of *all ultimate ends of desire* of whatever sort.

Ends of desire were by the ancient moralists called *goods;* in Plato's Academy a good was currently defined as "a thing aimed at."[3] And the distinction between ultimate and proximate ends of desire was spoken of as a distinction between "goods desired for their own sake alone" and "goods desired for the sake of something else."[1] Moralists of the present day very commonly prefer to speak of *values* instead of goods, and to distinguish between values which are "instrumental" and values which are "intrinsic." For ourselves we shall use the two modes of speech indifferently; and shall understand that to place the roots of our religious faith in our moral nature is the same as to say that such faith is grounded in our knowledge of good and evil, and again the same as to say that it is born of our insight into ultimate values.

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[1] The phrase is taken from the late Arthur Clutton-Brock's fine *Studies in Christianity*, where (on p. 34) he shows how oftentimes a man will listen rather to "the lies that external reality seems to tell him than to the truth of his own heart, which is the truth of God," and adds: "Still he has always the desire to listen to the truth of his own heart, always the desire to know the God who speaks in that truth; and so the words of Christ are music to him, even though they be nothing but music. Those who say that they are false wish that they were true; and that wish is the whisper of their values, not acted upon and so not believed."

[2] Hegel, as is well known, attempted thus to narrow down the meaning of the word morality by drawing a distinction between *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit.* The absurdity of this terminology becomes evident when we reflect that *Sitten* is the precise German equivalent of the Latin *mores.* The nemesis of this attempt to attach different meanings to Romance and Teutonic roots that are in reality synonymous is that the distinction intended is untranslatable into the Romance languages. English translators of Hegel have accordingly resorted to the device of using the *Greek* root where Hegel uses the Teutonic one, and have rendered the distinction as between the moral and the ethical; thereby adding to the confusion, ἦθος being in reality the exact Greek equivalent of *mos.*

[3] See, *e.g.*, Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, I, 1.

The present chapter will be devoted to a brief critical survey of the most important stages in the historical development of the theory of religion that is here indicated.

Kant's Theory of Religion.

II

We shall begin, for the present at least, with Immanuel Kant. It is true that very significant anticipations of this general line of thought are to be found much further back in theological history. In particular mention might be made of the Socratic and Platonic doctrine that the Good is to be regarded not merely as the supreme object of human desire and aspiration but also and particularly as the very core of the real order of things, the true creative and sustaining Cause of all that is. This identity of the Good and the Real is indeed the very cope-stone of Platonism. But in none of Plato's published works is it dwelt upon for more than a moment, and it is difficult to guess how far its profound and far-reaching implications were actually evident to him.[2] At all events much of the deeper meaning of it became lost to the later philosophical tradition, and it was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and then only in isolated thinkers like Pascal and Rousseau and Hume and the Spinoza of the *Tracta-*

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] The doctrine was, indeed, a jealously guarded mystery. "I must state it to you in riddles," wrote Plato to Dionysius, "so that in case something happens to the tablet 'by land or sea in secret nook,' he who reads may not understand. It is like this. It is in relation to the king of all and on his account that everything exists; and this fact is the cause of all that is beautiful." (*Epist.*, II, tr. Post.) After the famous Socratic passage in the *Phædo* (96–100), perhaps the clearest passage dealing with the subject is *Republic*, VI, 508–509.

tus Theologico-Politicus, or in more vaguely defined tendencies of thought present in the Deistic movement—that any real appreciation of it is again apparent. To us it now appears as a characteristically modern insight and as finding its first fully argued expression in the Critical Philosophy of Kant.

The prime aim of that philosophy was, in its maker's own famous words, "to make room for faith" in the intellectual world of its day. There was danger of faith being crowded out by natural science, and Kant felt that it could only be rehabilitated by means of a thoroughgoing examination and nice readjustment of the rights of the two claimants. It was the task which Socrates and Plato had set for themselves more than two thousand years before, and ever since it had been the fundamental task with which philosophy had occupied itself—the task of Aquinas and the Middle Ages, the task of Descartes and all his modern following. It is true that the terms of the problem had themselves become to a certain extent transformed during these many centuries of groping after a solution. When Socrates in the *Phædo,* or Plato in the tenth book of the *Laws,* graphically depicts the spiritual struggle between "piety" and "the inquiry concerning nature," he is thinking of the opposition between Athenian state-religion and Eleatic science; whereas to Kant faith means eighteenth-century ("Deistic") Christianity and science means the Newtonian physics. But these differences do not, after all, go so deep as might at first be thought; nor is there any doubt that the real reason why it was necessary for Kant to attack the old problem afresh was not that its terms had changed but that none of the previous solutions had proved satisfactory.

Kant believed that the first step towards a new solution of the problem was to determine in a precise way the limits of the information about the world which could be reached by means of the categories and methods of natural science. This question he faced in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* the first volume of his celebrated trilogy; and his well-known conclusion was that whereas the fundamental conceptions of the Newtonian physics are quite unassailably sound when used within the limits of actual, or even of possible, experience, they are yet of such a nature as to be demonstrably inapplicable beyond those limits, and therefore either quite useless or dangerously misleading when used for the solution of problems regarding the ultimate nature of reality as a whole. This view carried with it the complete abandonment of all attempts to form a cosmology on the basis of natural science—the rejection of 'metaphysics' in the Kantian sense of that confusing word. Natural science must be given an entirely free hand in the interpretation of our particular and finite experiences, but it can never lead us to any safe answers to our ultimate questionings. Of that region there is no 'science,' that is to say, no knowledge in the strict Greek sense of the word. Accordingly, in the Preface to its second edition, Kant describes the task of the first *Critique* as "the abolition of knowledge in order to make room for faith." The work is, in effect, a great assault on rationalism—or on dogmatism, as Kant himself more commonly called it.

The second *Critique* thus opens with a cleared field. Its special task is the analysis of the moral consciousness and (as the third sentence of the Preface informs us) "its business is to show that there is pure practical reason" or (as it is afterwards more frequently put) that "pure reason can be practical." With all the elements in the meaning of this statement we cannot now concern ourselves, but it means this in the first place: that reason is operative also in our moral consciousness, and that it operates by means of a new set of categories or a priori propositions, which constitute the moral law. The fundamental principles of morality are thus utterly independent of our sense-experience, and of speculations based upon it, and of the principles ("the categories of the theoretic reason") which reason employs for its organisation. We do not need, that is to say, to wait until the natural scientists and metaphysicians finally determine the nature of the cosmos and man's place in it, in order then to make a series of deductions as to what we ought to do. On the contrary, our knowledge of what we ought to do is both prior to any such speculations and more certain than the best of them. For the basic utterances of the moral consciousness, while quite independent of the categories employed in sense-experience and natural science, are no less well grounded in the nature of reason than they.

> "We may call the consciousness of this fundamental law a fact of reason, because we cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason. . . .

However, when we regard this law as *given*, it must be observed in order not to fall into any misconception, that it is not an empirical fact, but the sole fact of the pure reason, which thereby announces itself as originally legislative."[1]

"The moral law is given as a fact of pure reason of which we are a priori conscious, and which is apodictically certain, though it be granted that in experience no example of its exact fulfilment can be found. Hence the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proved by any deduction by any efforts of the theoretical reason, whether speculative or empirically supported; and therefore, even if we renounced its apodictic certainty, it could not be proved a posteriori by experience, and yet it is firmly established of itself."[2]

Thus does Kant vindicate the independent rationality of the moral consciousness. And now the question arises whether it be possible to build up, on this fresh basis of our knowledge of where our duty lies, what it was found impossible to construct on the basis of natural science—namely, a view of the ultimate nature and meaning of things such as will satisfy the needs of religion. Kant's persuasion is that it *is* possible. The essential tenets of religious faith may, he believes, be exhibited as necessarily bound up with the fundamental utterances of the moral consciousness. It is at this point that Kant breaks something like new ground in the history of theological inquiry.

It is true that the close and indissoluble connection between religion and morality had always been evident to inquirers, but they had for the most part spoken as if religious certainty were logically prior to moral certainty—as if, that is, our consciousness of moral obligation rested on a prior basis of religious belief. What Kant did was to reverse this order, and to show that whereas our consciousness of moral obligation rested only on itself (being an ultimate datum of reason), the fundamental beliefs of religion were themselves in need of such support as only our moral consciousness could give them. A theological ethic, he said, is wrong in principle, whereas an ethical theology is the only theology that can possibly stand. This distinction is vital and central to Kant's whole thinking. It was clear in his mind as early as 1766, when he wrote with reference to belief in a future life:

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[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Rosenkranz, VIII, pp. 142–143.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 163.

> "It seems more in accordance with human nature and with the purity of morals to base the expectation of a future world on the sentiments of a well-behaved soul than contrariwise to base its good behaviour on the hope of another world. We are thus left with *moral faith*, the simplicity of which can be superior to many a subtlety of argumentation, and which is alone suited to men of every condition, inasmuch as it leads them in no roundabout way to their true ends."[1]

And it forms a main theme of the closing volume of the great Critical trilogy, published twenty-four years later:

> "An ethico-theology is possible; for though morality can subsist without theology as regards its rule, it cannot do so as regards the final purpose which this same rule imposes upon it, unless reason is to be deprived of what is necessary to it. But a theological ethic (of pure reason) is impossible; because laws, which reason itself does not originally give and whose observance it does not bring about as a pure practical faculty, cannot be moral."[2]

The whole matter is well summed up in a passage towards the end of the first *Critique*, where it is said that "the whole interest of reason is centred in the three following questions: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) What may I hope? The first question is purely speculative" and the answer to it must be that we can in the strict sense *know* nothing about the real nature of things. "The second question is purely practical. . . . The third question is at once practical and theoretical; the practical forming a clue to the answer of the theoretical and (in its highest form) speculative question." The distinction between "hoping" and "knowing" is thus that the former "bears the same relation to the law of morality as does the latter to the law of nature." "The former concludes that something is because something ought to take place; the latter concludes that something is because something does take place."[3] Hope, in this usage, is of course but another name for what Kant more commonly calls faith (*Glaube*). And when it comes to seeking an answer to our ultimate questionings, it is on such moral faith alone that we must rely, and not on scientific knowledge. "Physico-theology," he says in the *Critique of Judgment*, "however far it may be pursued, can disclose to us nothing of a *final purpose* of creation." "It is reason by means of its *moral* principles that can first produce the concept of God."[1]

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[1] From the peroration of the *Träume eines Geistersehers*.

[2] *Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, V, p. 499.

[3] *Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, III, pp. 531–532.

How then does it produce it? What is the nature of the transition from moral principle to religious faith? Kant's favourite way of stating the matter is to say that our moral nature *demands* the reality of the objects of religion. The existence of God and of a future life (the two leading articles of Kant's eighteenth-century creed) thus appear as ethical *postulates*. To deny them, says Kant, would lead to an "*absurdum morale*"; and that, to any man who realises the sound basis that morals have in reason, is no whit less serious than an "*absurdum logicum*" would be.

> "The righteous man may say: I will that there be a God, that my existence in this world be also an existence outside the chain of physical causes . . . and that my duration be endless: I firmly abide by this, and will not let this faith be taken from me."[2]

Yet it is not a case of believing what one *wishes* or *likes* to believe:

> "We are in no wise justified in assuming, on account of what we *wish* on merely *subjective* grounds, that the means thereto are possible or that its object is real."[3]

A mere private desire or whim must not be confused with a constraint of our moral nature. The fact is indeed that it is not *we*, as individuals, who want God and a future life; it is our reason, our moral reason, that wants these things. Religion is thus based on nothing less than "a want of reason," "a pure moral ground of practical reason," "a pure moral need," as Kant variously expresses it. It is therefore not so much that we want to believe in God as that we feel we *ought*[4] to believe in Him and *have no right not* to believe in Him—because in doing so we should be proving false to the deepest thing within us.

> "Since the moral law is at the same time my maxim—as reason requires that it should be—I am irresistibly constrained to believe in the existence of God and in a future life; and I am sure that nothing can make this belief

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[1] *Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, V, 450, 460.

[2] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Werke*, ed. Rosenkranz, VIII, p. 289.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] "Zu ihm als Endzweck fortzuschreiten ist Pflicht," we read in the work *Ueber die Fortschritte der Metaphysik*.

to waver, since I should thereby overthrow my moral principles, which I cannot renounce without becoming abominable in my own eyes."[1]

Religious faith is thus defined by Kant as "*trust in the promise of the moral law,*" or, more fully, as "trust in the attainment of a design, the promotion of which is a duty."[2] Such is Kant's answer to the question, What is religion?

It now remains to be shown, however, that the moral consciousness actually does demand the reality of the objects of religion—and, in particular, of God and immortality; and this Kant does by endeavouring to exhibit them as logically necessary implicates of what might be called a completed moral outlook. Such an outlook is not, as such, necessary to virtue. All that is necessary to virtue is awareness of, and obedience to, the unconditional claim of the moral law upon my will. This claim, as we saw, rests on no prior belief about the constitution of things, nor upon any promise or guaranty of a reward to follow. What matters primarily is not that my obedience should be rewarded or vindicated, nor even that it should attain any outward end; what matters is rather the pure gold of obedience itself. This is high Stoic doctrine, and was first preached in Athens by Zeno of Citium about 350 B. C. "Supposing," it has been said, "you are a servant sent to fetch a parcel from the post-office for your employer, you may be perfectly indifferent as to whether the parcel has arrived or not; your whole action in going to the post-office, all the consecutive movements of your feet, will be directed by an intention to get the parcel, but if you found that it was not there, you would feel no disappointment, and rest satisfied with having fulfilled your part in the business. This is a type of the attitude of the Stoic Wise Man towards outward things."[3] And Kant believes it to be the true moral attitude. Nothing matters as compared with, and certainly nothing matters apart from, the Good Will.

And yet the Good Will is not quite everything. Though the supreme thing needful is the attainment of a subjectively good disposition of will, we cannot in the end avoid being morally interested also in the attainment of an objectively good state of affairs, a moral order of things. Kant expresses this by saying that whereas virtue is the *supreme* good (*supremum bonum*), it is not the *complete* good or *summum bonum.* The complete good "requires happiness also"; nay more, it requires "the distribution of happiness in exact proportion to morality," for morality or virtue may be regarded simply as "worthiness to be happy." Thus the *summum bonum* consists of "virtue and happiness together." That is to say, the final object of moral aspiration is a double one; consisting, *first,* of a perfected virtue and, *second,* of happiness as perfect as the virtue and following upon it. And if the universe is such that this double end is unattainable, "then the moral law also which commands us to promote it is directed to vain imaginary ends, and must consequently be false."[1]

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[1] *Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, III, p. 545.

[2] In the *Critique of Judgment, Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, V, p. 486.

[3] Edwyn Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 59.

That, however, is a *reductio ad absurdum;* for the validity of the moral law is immediately evident to reason. Hence we may conclude that the universe is such that (1) the attainment of complete virtue is possible for all rational beings, and (2) happiness accompanies virtue in exact proportion. As to (1), however, it is abundantly clear that a complete virtue cannot be attained within the allotted span of three score years and ten, or indeed in any finite period. Hence man must have an endless life, and our immortality is proved. And as to (2), experience shows clearly that virtue does not by the ordinary course of nature lead to proportionate happiness. "We cannot expect in the world by the most punctilious observance of the moral law any necessary connection of happiness with virtue adequate to the *summum bonum.*"[2] "Therefore the *summum bonum* is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme Being," who shall see to it that the required apportionment shall be made; and "it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God."[3] Such is Kant's demonstration that, as he puts it, "morality inevitably leads to religion."

To a modern reader, no doubt, Kant's requirement that the virtuous man be made happy in exact proportion to his goodness is apt to be singularly unconvincing. It must, however, be realised that this is but the eighteenth-century way of expressing a requirement which is capable of being stated very differently and in such a manner as to appeal to us all. No religious doctrine was more universally accepted in the eighteenth century than that sin deserved and would receive the punishment of pain, while goodness deserved and would as certainly receive the reward of happiness. That was one of the few items of orthodox belief that were never questioned by the most thoroughgoing Deist or freethinker. It was regarded as the very backbone of the just moral ordering of the world. It is the essence of Leibnitz's Optimism and the key to his Theodicy; and Kant very closely adheres to the Leibnitzo-Wolfian statement of it. As early as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* we read:

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[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Ed. cit.,* p. 251; Abbott's transl., p. 210.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Op. cit.,* p. 267.

> "Leibnitz called the world, when viewed in relation to the rational beings which it contains, and the moral relations in which they stand to each other under the government of the *summum bonum*, the Kingdom of Grace. . . . To view ourselves, therefore, as in the Kingdom of Grace, in which all happiness awaits us, except in so far as we ourselves limit our participation in it by not being worthy of happiness, is a practically necessary idea of reason."[1]

If we are fair to Kant,[2] then, we must realise that what he is contending for is nothing less than *belief in a real moral order*. While it is true that the moral law is apprehended by us as an ultimate datum of our consciousness, yet we cannot be content to leave it forever thus hanging in the thin air of the ideal. Though my recognition of an obligation laid upon me to be just and unselfish and truthful rests upon no prior judgment as to the hidden nature of the real order, yet I may well ask how an obligation to be these things *can* be laid upon me, if the real order in which I live is entirely indifferent to the value of them. How can a denizen of a non-moral universe be *obliged* to be moral? What could such an obligation mean and whence could it derive? But the belief that this is a moral universe implies at least this —that it does make some difference to the real order of things and the final sum of things whether we do right or wrong. And that is to say that virtue must in some way be objectively vindicated. The universe must, as it were, be on the side of goodness; it cannot be ethically neutral, indifferent to the moral issue. As Kant himself says in one place, there must be "a harmony between nature and morality."[1] Nowadays we understand that better than if he had said (as he usually does) "a harmony between happiness and virtue"; yet to Kant's contemporaries the two phrases were practically synonymous. The following passage from *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* may finally serve to make this clear:

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[1] *Ed. cit.*, p. 536.

[2] And after all, however defective Kant's way of connecting virtue and happiness may seem to us to be, we have to remember what a genuine advance it marked on anything that was being taught in his day. This was what was being taught in England almost in the same year: "Virtue is the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God and *for the sake of everlasting happiness*." (Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, 1785, book I, ch. VII.). Kant at least turned all the batteries of his moral scorn upon *that*.

> "The laws of morality command absolutely, no matter what the result may be. . . . All men could find full satisfaction in this if they followed merely the prescription of pure reason in the law as they ought. Why do they need to know the issue of their moral action and inaction, which the course of the world will bring about? It is enough for them that they do their duty; this earthly life may be the end of all, and even in it happiness and worth may perhaps never have joined hands. After all, however, it is one of the unavoidable limitations of man and of his practical faculty of reason . . . that in all actions he looks forward to the result, in order in it to discover something which can serve him as an end. . . . Now in this end, although it is laid before him by reason alone, man seeks something which he can *love*."[2]

Man, as moral agent, cannot in the end rest content with doing his duty, but *seeks something which he can love* (*sucht etwas, was er lieben kann*)—that is the real strategic centre of Kant's defence of religion.

It is thus made plain that although we cannot reach God and the unseen world by scientific speculation, or have any theoretical knowledge of them, we can nevertheless reach them by way of moral or practical faith. But, it may be asked, does not this come to precisely the same thing? Is it not merely that in the former case the premise of our argument would have been a fact of sense-perception, while in the latter it is an ethical judgment of equal certainty? Is not the logic of the matter as rigorous in the one case as in the other? And if it is, why call the former knowledge and the latter faith? And can we not build up as complete a metaphysical system on the latter foundation as the boldest speculators have thought to build on the former one?

Such queries as these Kant always answers with a very emphatic negative. He is quite sure that practical faith can never amount to theoretic knowledge, or be made the foundation for a scientific metaphysical construction. It gives us, he explains, all the certainty requisite for the guidance of our lives and for our spiritual comfort and support; but it does not provide us with material for a *theory* of the Cosmos. "We cannot make any use of it in a theoretical point of view." And why not? Kant states his reasons in various ways, which cannot perhaps be made altogether consistent with one another, but which may well be regarded as having, each of them, a deeper quality than consistency with the others, namely, insight into some part of the truth in this deep matter. To begin with, there seems to be something short of absolute clarity in Kant's mind as to whether the process by which we arrive at a belief in a real moral order possesses strict *logical* cogency. What he is always clear about is that it is our *duty* to proceed to this belief. "It is a need which has a force of *law,* to assume something without which that cannot be which we must inevitably set before us as the aim of our action."[1] But sometimes he seems to argue that just because it *is* of the nature of a duty, it can hardly be a matter of full logical necessity. There is in fact a voluntary element in it, something of a will to believe. "A faith that is commanded is nonsense. . . . This, then, is not commanded, but being a voluntary determination of the judgment, it has itself sprung from the moral disposition of the mind; it may therefore at times waver even in the well disposed, but can never be reduced to unbelief."[2] "Hence," he says in another of his works, "in a moral and practical regard faith has in itself a moral worth, since it contains a free acceptance (*ein freies Annehmen*). The *Credo* in the three articles of the Confession of the Pure Practical Reason . . . is a free affirmation. . . . It therefore permits of no imperative (no *crede*)."[3] "My conviction," he says once more, and this time in the first *Critique,* "is not logical, but moral certainty."[4] On the other hand, it is undoubtedly true that he usually conceives himself as being able to furnish, when called upon to do so, a vindication of the truth of religion which is of the nature of rational argumentation; and the proofs of God and immortality in the *Critique of Practical Reason* are nothing if not logically binding.

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[1] *Ed. cit.*, p. 270.

[2] *Werke*, ed. Hartenstein, vol. VI, p. 101.

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[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Ed. cit.,* p. 107.

[2] *Op. cit.,* p. 292; Abbott's transl.

[3] In the work *Ueber die Fortschritte.*

[4] *Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Ed. cit.,* p. 545.

Quite apart from this issue, however, there is another reason why our religious belief in God and the unseen world cannot be a ground for any speculative construction, namely, that *it does not give us any knowledge as to what these are in themselves, but only of a single relation* (the moral one) *in which they stand to ourselves.* Thus the kind of cognition we can have of God, though sufficient for the practical needs of our souls, is, as it were, far too anthropomorphic for the purposes of theoretic knowledge. We can satisfy our souls with God, but we can never satisfy our curiosity about Him. "This is not to be reckoned as knowledge, but only as a right to admit and assume" supersensible realities in a purely practical point of view, and it "does not give pure theoretic reason the least encouragement to run riot into the transcendent."[1]

> "For we do not thereby [*i. e.*, in believing in immortality, freedom, God] take knowledge of the nature of our souls, nor of the intelligible world, nor of the Supreme Being, with respect to what they are in themselves. . . . How freedom is possible . . . is not thereby discovered; but only that there *is* such a causality is postulated by the moral law and in its behoof. It is the same with the remaining ideas, the possibility of which no human intelligence will ever fathom, but the truth of which, on the other hand, no sophistry will ever wrest from the conviction even of the commonest man."[2]

Thus reason is

> "compelled to admit *that there are such objects*, although it is not able to define them more closely, so as itself to extend this knowledge of the objects (which have now been given it on practical grounds, and only for practical use)."[3]

And we are enabled

> "to conceive the supersensible definitely, and yet only so far as it is defined by such predicates as are necessarily connected with the pure practical purpose. . . ."[4]

This does not mean that we can know only the "moral attributes" of God, but rather that we can know only those of His attributes which are relevant to our moral need of Him.

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[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Ed. cit.*, p. 175; Abbott's transl., p. 147.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 276; Abbott, p. 231.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 279; Abbott, p. 233.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 286; Abbott, p. 239.

We may now sum up this all too brief account of Kant's theological theory by means of a longish chain of excerpts from a little-read work of his own *On the Progress of Metaphysics since Leibnitz and Wolf,* written in 1791.

> "Of the nature of supersensible objects—of God, of our own free agency, and of our souls when separated from our bodies—we can know absolutely nothing which concerns the inner principle of the existence of these things or its consequences and effects. . . . The question thus remains as to whether there is nevertheless possible a practical-dogmatic knowledge of these supersensible objects. . . . If there is, then we should have to investigate the supersensible entity not as to what it is in itself but only as we are constrained to conceive of it, and to postulate its character, if it is to be adequate to the practical-dogmatic object of the pure moral principle—that is, the ultimate end or *summum bonum.* We should thus refrain from instituting inquiries into the nature of objects which we make for ourselves, and make only for a necessary practical purpose, and which perhaps do not exist at all outside our idea . . . and shall be desirous only of knowing what kind of moral principles of action are incumbent upon us in accordance with that idea (which is made indispensably necessary to us by reason). Thus there arises a practical-dogmatic knowledge of the constitution of the object, in complete renunciation of a theoretical knowledge of it. . . . This kind of holding-for-true can only be expressed by the term *Faith.* . . . Such faith is the holding-for-true of a theoretical judgment (*e. g.*, 'there is a God') through practical reason. . . .
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> "Hence in a moral and practical regard faith has in itself a moral worth, since it contains a free acceptance. The *Credo* in the three articles of the Confession of Pure Practical Reason . . . is a free holding-for-true. . . . It therefore permits of no imperative (no *crede*), the ground on which we justify it (*der Beweisgrund dieser seiner Richtigkeit*) is no proof of the truth of these articles, considered as theoretical propositions; and is accordingly in no sense to be regarded as an objective enlightenment concerning the reality of their objects . . . but only as a subjectively, and indeed practically, valid (and for that purpose sufficient) enlightenment to the effect that we must so act as if we knew that these objects were real. . . .
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> "Theoretically, we do not by the strongest efforts of reason come the least degree nearer to the conviction of the existence of God, the reality of the highest good, and the prospect of a future life; for we can have no insight into the nature of supersensible objects. And yet practically, we make these objects for ourselves, according as we judge the idea of them to be helpful to the ultimate end of pure reason—an end which is morally necessary. . . .
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> "Now this is an argument which sufficiently proves to the human reason in its moral or practical exercise the existence of God as a moral Being. . . . It is not an absolute proof of His existence, but a proof of it in a certain reference only. . . . Plainly theology of this kind is not *theosophy;*

that is to say, it is not knowledge of the Divine nature (for that is inaccessible to us); but it is a knowledge of the hidden ground of determination of our will which, as manifested in ourselves alone, we do not find to be adequate to its own ends and which we therefore postulate as existing in another and supreme Being above us. . . . The moral argument might thus be called an argument κατ' ἄνθρωπον, valid for all men as rational beings, and not merely for the private modes of thought of this or that particular man; and as such it is to be distinguished from the theoretic-dogmatic argument κατ' ἀλήθειαν which asserts more things to be certain than it is given to man to know.'[1]

The limitations of Kant's Theory.

III

Let us now attempt to set down very briefly what seem the main defects or limitations in this statement of Kant's, as these have been revealed by the development of theological thought since his time. It would of course be out of place to concern ourselves here with the details either of his criticism of science in the first *Critique* or of his theory of morals as set forth in the first half (the *Analytic*) of the second. As to the former, we may content ourselves with suggesting the application to it of words which a later critic (the Earl of Balfour) has spoken of his own not dissimilar doctrine: "To some persons this train of reflection suggests nothing but sceptical misgiving and intellectual despair. To me it seems, on the other hand, to save us from both. What kind of a Universe would that be which we could understand? If it were intelligible (by us), would it be credible? If our reason could comprehend it, would it not be too narrow for our needs?"[2] And as to the latter, it may be granted without reserve that, despite the very profound elements of insight which it contains, the Kantian ethic cannot be defended as a whole, but is, on the contrary, open to severe criticism alike in respect of its legalism, its rigorism, and its individualism.

And even within the narrower scope of Kant's theory of religion we must confine ourselves to the larger issues and set aside the consideration of many not unimportant details. Clearly, for instance, Kant's limitation of the outlook of a rational religion to the threefold formula of 'God, freedom, and immortality' is to the modern reader a most forbidding feature of his treatment of religion, as indeed it was a feature which hardly survived his own generation. The same is largely true of the form in which he states his proofs of the first and third members of this trinity, and especially his proof of the existence of God. In his representation of God as a kind of Paymaster-in-chief, no less than in his choice of the articles of his *Bekenntnis des reinen praktischen Vernunftglaubens,* Kant was purely a child of his age. It is to be regretted that the meagre and unfortunate nature of his philosophical inheritance in these two respects has prevented so many readers from realising the profound insight of his own original contributions to the subject.

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[1] *Werke*, ed. Cassirer, VIII, pp. 280–290. The above can claim only to be a very rough rendering of these difficult passages.

[2] *The Foundations of Belief*, IV, 3, § 3.

These contributions all concern the nature of religious belief *as a whole* and the process by which we can become assured of its truth; and what we now have in mind to notice are certain limitations of his insight into these more general matters.

In the first place, the later development of theological thought along the lines originally laid out by Kant has made us realise that he himself fell short of a full working out of the implications of that determinative connection which he laboured so hard to establish between the beliefs of religion and the utterances of the moral consciousness. He was still enough of a rationalist to concern himself rather with the question as to how religious beliefs, already existing, could be proved to be true, than with the prior and deeper questions as to how these beliefs had come into being and as to what their real essence was. A superficial reader might thus think that Kant's theological significance lay merely in the fact that he destroyed three Theistic Proofs, and set up a fourth of very much the same kind in their place. But later history has shown that the main significance of Kant's contribution rather lay precisely in the fact that his 'Moral Proof' differed from the old Proofs in the all-important respect that it showed itself capable of being used not only as a buttress and support for religion but as an explanation of its origin, an interpretation of its meaning, and a guide among the manifold competing forms and doctrines of it. Having learned from Schleiermacher a new way of stating the theological question, the Ritschlian School, and others who were not Ritschlians, came to realise that the determinative dependence of religious faith on moral values was not merely a possible starting-point for the defence of faith, but the source from which faith originally springs and the key to its inmost character.

In the second place, there can be no doubt that Kant's reading of religion is too "moralistic" in the bad and narrow sense of that word. It savours unduly of what St. Paul called "the righteousness which is of the law." This is very plainly seen in his occasional reference to religion as being "the recognition of all duties as divine commands." As if being religious meant no more than that we should envisage our daily tasks as having been prescribed to us by a Supreme Lawgiver! It has therefore seemed to some that Kant has fatally impoverished and circumscribed the rich meaning of religion by linking it up too closely with the moral consciousness. Nor can it indeed be denied that we sadly miss from the pages of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* a proper recognition of the Pauline truth that those who live by the spirit are dead to the law. The question is, however, whether we are really stating our complaint correctly if we say that the Kantian teaching relates religion too organically and indissolubly to the life of duty; for St. Paul at least would never have admitted that that connection could be too close or intimate. Surely the real root of our difficulty with Kant lies not in the nature of the bond which he forges between faith and morality but rather in the kind of morality to which religion is thus attached and in terms of which it accordingly comes to be interpreted. If morality means only keeping the commandments—"obedience to a categorical imperative"—we may well feel that it provides too narrow a basis for Christian faith to rest upon. But if (as a more adequate ethical theory would instruct us) morality be rather the quest of the highest and most inclusive ideal which it is possible for man to seek after, the case is surely very different. To envisage moral laws as divine commands is one thing; to envisage the goal of human endeavour as being in line with the eternal purpose of God is a very different thing. Yet the difference is not that the former is moral and the latter is something else but that each represents a different way of reading the same moral consciousness. We think we are being repelled by Kant's moralism, whereas in reality we are being repelled by his legalism and his formalism. It is not his insistence on the life of duty that we really take exception to, but the narrow and abstract way in which he conceives and depicts that life.

A third point (and the last here to be singled out) where the Kantian analysis seems to stand in need of further reflection is its account of the exact nature of the transition from the moral to the religious outlook. Especially there is the question whether it is possible to claim for that transition full logical cogency—whether, that is to say, the fundamental affirmations of faith can be exhibited as strict logical implicates of our recognition of the moral claim upon our wills. At this point, as has been said, Kant seems to have wavered. In nearly all his works (and notably in each of the three Critiques) we find him wrestling with this difficulty, but nowhere do we feel that he has entirely solved it. It does indeed seem that once the doctrine of the *summum bonum* is granted, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul follow from it logically; but it has often been pointed out that what really stands in need of logical justification is the doctrine of the *summum bonum* itself. Has Kant ever really offered any demonstration that our recognition of duty's claim upon us carries with it the belief that the universe, as moral environment, must be no less ethically constituted than ourselves, as moral agents? Is the objectivism of the *Dialectic* even consistent with the subjectivism of the *Analytic,* let alone being its necessary logical implicate?

Here certainly is the crux of the matter, and yet there is one consideration which throws a somewhat different light upon it. For the question may be raised whether the difference in point of view between the *Analytic* and the *Dialectic* is not just the difference in point of view between morality as such and morality as finding its crown and completion in religion. Is not the doctrine of the *summum bonum* itself already a religious doctrine, and indeed the central doctrine of all religion? That the ideal is in some sense the real, that what ought to be will be or is—is not that the very meaning of faith? Surely Kant makes the passage from morality to religion not when he deduces the existence of God from the belief in the objective vindication of goodness but much rather when he passes *to* the belief in the objective vindication of goodness from the attitude of mere unquestioning obedience. It thus appears that despite the elaborate display of demonstration which the *Critique of Practical Reason* makes, the really crucial step—the step marking the actual transition from morality to religion—is not bridged by anything which can claim to be an adequate logical deduction. It is for this reason that the question of the exact nature of the transition from the moral to the religious consciousness has proved, as the immediate sequel will sufficiently reveal, a fruitful ground for further investigation and discussion among Kant's followers in the theological world.

Fichte's Theory of Religion.

IV

The most notable of Kant's immediate disciples was J. G. Fichte (1762–1814), and his theory of religion follows that of his master so closely that it is hardly necessary to give a separate account of it as a whole. Fichte's first preserved writing consists of a few pages of *Aphorisms on Religion,* jotted down in his twenty-eighth year. Some indication of the direction which his thoughts were afterwards to take is afforded by the following pronouncements upon Christianity:

> "It [*i. e.*, the Christian religion] contemplates God only in so far as He can come into relation to men. All investigations concerning His objective existence are precluded."
>
> "The Christian religion thus appears to be more adapted to the heart than to the understanding. It does not establish itself by demonstrations, but rather fills a need."[1]

A year later he travelled to Königsberg to lay before Kant his first considerable work, an *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation.* It met with Kant's warm approval, as indeed is not surprising from the faithfulness with which Kant's teaching is followed in nearly all important respects. Yet we sometimes feel that the subtlety and flexibility of Kant's thought tends here to be sacrificed to a too rigorous logic. "The moral law," we are told, "if it is not to contradict itself, and cease to be a law, . . . must not only issue commands over nature but must actually rule over it. . . . God's existence is thus to be accepted as being as certain as a moral law. There *is* a God."[2]

In 1798 he published in the *Philosophischer Journal,* of which he was the editor, a short article *Concerning the Ground of Our*

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[1] *Gesammelte Werke,* V, pp. 3, 5.

[2] *Gesammelte Werke,* V, p. 40.

Faith in a Divine Government of the World; and the thought of his earlier maturity cannot be better represented than by some excerpts from this paper. After a brief introduction, he sets out in the following very significant fashion:

> "What has hitherto almost universally distorted our point of view, and will perhaps long continue to distort it, is that the so-called moral (or, for that matter, any philosophical) proof of a divine government of the world has been taken to be a *proof* in the narrow sense; it being apparently thought that faith in God was first to be introduced into the world, and demonstrated to the world, by these demonstrations."

Instead of that,

> "We would have our reasoning regarded by no means as an attempt to convince the unbeliever but rather as a derivation of the conviction of the believer. We have to do nothing but answer the problem of causation: *How does mankind arrive at that belief?*"

There is here the promise of a real advance upon the Kantian formulation. He goes on to say:

> "Where is the philosopher now to look for the necessary source of this faith which he presupposes? In a supposed necessity to argue from the existence or the constitution of the world of sense to a reasonable Author of the same? By no means! For he knows too well that a reasonable philosophy cannot so argue . . ., however much a false philosophy may do so in its embarrassment at wishing to explain something the existence of which it cannot deny but the true source of which is hidden from it. . . . An explanation of the world and its forms by reference to the purposes of an Intelligence is complete nonsense, in so far as it is really a question of explaining only *the world and its forms* on the ground of a *pure* natural science. Besides, the proposition 'An Intelligence is the author of the world of sense' does not help us in the slightest, nor bring us a single step onward; for it is not in the least degree intelligible, giving us only a few empty words. . . . Hence, starting from the world of sense, there is no possible way of arriving at the conception of a moral ordering of the world; that is to say, if we really think of the world of sense alone, and do not . . . already assume a moral order without realising that we do so."

We must therefore start, as Kant said, not from the world of sense but from ourselves as free agents, *i. e.*, from our moral consciousness.

> "For morality can be constituted only by means of itself, and not through any logical process. . . . Nor is there any fixed standing-place but this one, which is laid out not by logic but by our moral consciousness."

Starting thus, we can really arrive at faith in an objective moral order. And it is a faith that is well grounded:

> "It is not a wish, a hope, a consideration and estimation of reasons for and against, or a free resolve to accept something the opposite of which is perhaps also possible. This conclusion is, if only one presupposes the resolve to listen to the law that speaks within, absolutely necessary. It is immediately contained in that resolve. It is that resolve itself.
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> "Let us note also the order of thought here. We do not argue from the possibility to the actuality, but conversely. We do not say 'I ought, because I can'; but rather 'I can, because I ought.' That I ought, and what I ought, is the first and most immediate datum. It requires no further explanation, no justification or authorisation. It is known of itself, and is of itself true. It is not proved or determined by any other truth, but all other truth is rather determined by it."

The final pages of the article are noteworthy as marking a striking departure from the Kantian teaching at a very important point.

> "This is the true faith. This moral order is the *Divine*. . . . It is constructed by doing what is right. This is the only possible confession of faith—gladly and unconcernedly to do what duty bids us do, without any doubt or worry about the consequences. . . .
>
> "Moreover this faith is faith whole and complete. This living and active moral order is itself God. We need no other God, and we can comprehend no other. There is no ground in reason for going beyond this moral world-order and, by means of an inference from effect to cause, assuming further a Particular Being, as the cause of this order. . . .
>
> "It is not at all doubtful, but rather the most certain of all things, and indeed the ground of all other certainty, and the only absolute objective truth, that there is a moral world-order; that to every rational individual there is appointed a definite place in that order; that all that befalls him, except so far as it is the result of his own conduct, is a result of this plan; that without it no hair falls from his head and, within the sphere of his activity, no sparrow from the roof; that every really good action succeeds, and every bad one as certainly fails, and that to those who truly love the Good, all things work together for the best. On the other hand it must be equally certain to anybody who gives the matter a moment's reflection and honestly confesses to himself the result of such reflection, that the conception of God as a separate substance is impossible and contradictory. And it is permissible to say this plainly and to put down the prating of the schools, in order that the true religion of joyous well-doing may thereby come to its own."[1]

Fichte, that is to say, refuses to follow Kant in arguing from the moral order to a personal God. The impersonal moral order, he claims, is itself all the God there is. This declaration cost the philosopher dear. The publication of the article caused an immediate storm to break about his head; he was condemned by the government at Weimar, and dismissed from his chair at Jena. In a later chapter we shall concern ourselves with the justice of this departure from Kant; here it need only be remarked that the later development of inquiry followed the master rather than the disciple at this crucial point, as indeed it was the former and not the latter who could appeal to the almost unanimous testimony of world-religion on the matter.

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[1] *Gesammelte Werke*, V. pp. 177–189.

Little need be said in this place of the otherwise very significant changes which manifested themselves in Fichte's thought during the remaining fifteen years of his life. In general philosophy he gradually approached the standpoint of what later came to be known as Absolute Idealism. The general tone of his religious writings changed also in a very marked way. It has sometimes been said that his philosophy lost much of its "severely ethical character," and became more mystical and contemplative. But the truth seems rather to be that his ethical point of view itself changed, and his understanding of religion became modified accordingly. His moral outlook became ever less rigoristic and more serene in character; and with that he gradually awoke to a sympathy with certain sides of the religious consciousness which he had previously seemed to neglect.[1]

V

Lotze's Theory of Religion -

Fichte's refusal to advance from a moral order to a personal God was subjected to a very penetrating criticism by the next thinker whom we shall mention as carrying on the tradition of this line of thought—Hermann Lotze (1817–1881).[2] That Lotze's fundamental problem is precisely the same as Kant's may be gathered from the opening sentences of the Introduction to his widely read *Microcosmus:* "Between spiritual needs and the results of human science there is an unsettled dispute of long standing." Nor is his manner of essaying a settlement of this dispute essentially different from that of the earlier thinker. While always showing, in a degree not perhaps very common among philosophers, the most "complete respect for the physical sciences, for their developed method and their intellectual force," he still insists upon "the total renunciation of our desire to answer metaphysical questions by the way of mathematico-mechanical constructions."[1] By what kind of construction are we then to answer them? The answer is again the Kantian one: 'By an ethical construction.' Mathematics and physics acquaint us only with the 'forms' under which reality expresses itself, with the orderly mechanism of its action; whereas reality itself is not a mechanism but rather uses mechanism as an instrument for the realisation of its own ends. What these ends are only our moral experience can tell us. Lotze's last-published work, that *Metaphysic* which was intended as the second of three parts of a complete System of Philosophy, concludes with these words:

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[1] See R. Falckenberg, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 2 *Aufl.*, p. 359.

[2] See, *e. g.*, his *Microcosmus*, Eng. transl., vol. II, pp. 673–676.

> "It is a true saying that God had ordered all things by measure and number, but what he ordered was not measures and numbers themselves but that which deserved or required to possess them. . . . The meaning of the world is what comes first. . . . All those laws which can be designated by the common name of mathematical mechanics . . . exist not in their own authority nor as a baseless destiny to which reality is compelled to bow. They are (to use such language as men can) only the first consequences which, in the pursuit of its end, the living and active meaning of the world has laid at the foundation of all particular realities as a command embracing them all. We do not know this meaning in its fulness, and therefore we cannot deduce from it what we can only attempt, in one universal conviction, to retrace to it."

And then he speaks of how he closed an early work "with the dictum that the true beginning of Metaphysics lies in Ethics"; and goes on to say:

> "I admit that the expression is not exact; but I still feel certain of being on the right track when I seek in that which *should* be the ground of that which *is*. What seems inacceptable in this view it will perhaps be possible to justify in another connection." ✓

The promise, alas, was never kept, for death called the writer before he had well begun the composition of the third part of the System, which was to deal with morality, art, and religion. And the gap is filled only to a comparatively slight extent by references in his other published works. In the posthumously published and very sketchy notes of his lectures on the Philosophy of Religion the conviction of the obligatory majesty of moral duty is said to be "the most absolute certainty and one that needs no derivation from any other source whatever," and it is added that

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[1] *Metaphysic*, Eng. transl., vol. II, p. 318.

> "This conviction is the absolutely fundamental point upon which the entire religious character of our view of the world depends. And for him who does not directly experience and acknowledge this, all questions of religious philosophy are altogether superfluous."[1]

And further on:

> "The only element common to men, to which an appeal may be made for the confirmation of religion, consists in those 'utterances of the conscience' that primarily only say what *ought* to be, and yet after all permit an indirect inference from this as to what *is*."[2]

In various other writings of Lotze's the relation of the *ought* to the *is* is dealt with under the different name of the relation of *value* to *reality*. And religious faith is then said to be an argument, or at least a transition, from the valuable to the existent. It is the persuasion of religion, that is to say, that what is best must also be most real. The Good is thus, as Plato first taught, the deepest secret of existence, and "all metaphysical truth consists only in the forms which must be assumed by a world that depends upon the principle of the Good."[3] Yet Lotze is like Kant in not seeming entirely certain of the possibility of establishing this fundamental belief by a strictly logical process. In one place, for instance, he speaks of

> "the thought not further demonstrable as a matter of strict metaphysic, that the highest reason for the formation of the World, and of our metaphysical thoughts about it, is to be sought for solely in the idea of the Highest Good—Person and Thing."[4]

In the more popular parlance of the *Microcosmus* it is said that any final view of the meaning of the world must rest on "the inspirations of a reason appreciative of value." And whatever may have happened in science, in actual life nothing has ever been able to shake the belief

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[1] *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 100.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[3] *Outlines of Metaphysic*, Eng. transl., p. 153.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 154. The paragraph at the foot of p. 153 is especially Kantian. *Cf.* also *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 137: "The foregoing reflections, which confessedly have not the value of demonstrations in the proper sense, . . ."

> "that, in its feeling for the value of things and their relations, our reason possesses as genuine a revelation as, in the principles of logical investigation, it has an indispensable instrument of experience."[1]

But any further inquiry into the nature and grounds of this belief is lacking, and towards the end of the work we are told that

> "the reasons which justify this attempt to blend the Existent and the Worthy belong to those intermediate links of the course of thought which we may fairly skip."[2]

Ritschl's theory of Religion.

VI

Lotze, however, possesses an added significance in the history of nineteenth-century theology owing to his influence upon Albrecht Ritschl, his colleague in the University of Göttingen.

Ritschl's approach to the study of the religious problem was in many ways a very different one from that of Kant, Fichte, and Lotze. He was essentially a churchman and was by profession a teacher of "dogmatic theology." His writings everywhere bear the very definite stamp of coming, as it were, from *within* the Christian Church; and he always felt that his essential task was to clarify, elucidate, and interpret that Church's faith. "The immediate object of theological cognition," he tells us at the beginning of the constructive part of his great monograph on *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, "is the community's faith that it stands to God in a relation essentially conditioned by the forgiveness of sins."[3] And it was his constantly reiterated conviction that such a faith could properly be understood and interpreted only by those who themselves shared it. "We are able to know and understand God, sin, conversion, eternal life, in the Christian sense, only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which Christ has founded."[4] The question for Kant and his philosophical successors had for the most part (and in spite of Fichte's protest) tended to be whether, and by what means, religious faith can be justified; whereas for Ritschl the primary question is rather what religious faith essentially is, how it takes its rise in the human soul, and by what principles it elaborates itself into a detailed system of beliefs. This changed *Fragestellung* turned out to mark a very real advance in theological inquiry, standing, as it did, for the breaking of the last bond with eighteenth-century rationalism.

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[1] Eng. transl., vol. I, p. 245.

[2] Vol. II, p. 671.

[3] Vol. III, Eng. transl., p. 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Ritschl's greatest contribution to theological science was unquestionably the admirably fruitful "dogmatic method" which he used in the interpretation of Christian doctrine. Something like a revolution in dogmatic method had, of course, been introduced by Schleiermacher's great *Christian Faith;* and Schleiermacher was, without doubt, the chief of the several influences acting upon Ritschl. Nevertheless what is chiefly of concern to us for the moment is precisely the respects in which, under the influence of the Kantian movement, Ritschl was enabled to modify, correct, and supplement the theological principle and method of Schleiermacher, and by so doing to inaugurate the most widely influential of all nineteenth-century theological schools. Our exposition of Ritschl's principle and method is rendered more difficult by the fact that he himself was much more interested in using them than in describing them. He always showed a certain impatience with "these so-called questions of principle," being eager to pass on to what he considered the actual business of dogmatics. And his meagre occasional statements concerning these questions (which include, however, one polemical pamphlet on *Theology and Metaphysics*) seem clearly to bear upon them the marks of this impatience. They appear to be insufficiently thought out; they betray a real uncertainty of mind, having been constantly subjected to serious revision in a second or third edition of the books containing them; and they champion difficult, if not indeed quite indefensible, positions without much apparent awareness of the objections that may be taken to them. These defects have resulted in blinding the majority of English-speaking critics not only to the elements of deep insight which are mixed up with them in Ritschl's statement of his method but to the great value and fruitfulness of the method itself; so that in reading most of the English books on Ritschl we are kept wondering why one who seems mainly notable for the multitude of his perverse views and wrong-headed opinions should have been the most influential figure in the theological inquiry of our time! It may help to correct this false emphasis if we keep in mind Ritschl's own feeling in the matter, as shown, for example, in the following passage from a letter written during the composition of his *magnum opus:*

> "I have once again been struck by the unsatisfying nature of all these so-called questions of principle. . . . The art of theological interpretation has indeed fallen quite out of practice, and I am even doubtful if I can myself practise it sufficiently well to escape making a fool of myself; but all these prolegomena still make me think of such processes as the mixing of colours, the stretching of the canvas, the drawing aside of the curtain, the placing of the model, the washing of the hands, and to waste time over these things is not very attractive to me."[1]

As we had occasion to see at an earlier point in our discussion, Ritschl conceived his own especial task and interest to be limited in still another way; his problem being not so much the understanding of religion in general as "the understanding of Christianity" in particular. Possibly, however, the difference does not really go so deep as might at first sight appear; and at all events he does present us with a quite definite view of the nature of religion in general. It is essentially the Kantian view, with the one important difference that the chain of reflection which Kant had advanced rather as a buttress to religion is now clearly seen to be its own original source and foundation. Religion, we are told, is born of the effort of the human spirit to find a harmony between the world of nature and the inner world of personality.

> "In every religion what is sought, with the help of the superhuman spiritual power reverenced by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself, as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. For in the former *rôle* he is a part of nature, dependent upon her, subject to and confined by other things; but as spirit he is moved by the impulse to maintain his independence against them. In this juncture religion springs up as faith in superhuman spiritual powers, by whose help the power which man possesses of himself is in some way supplemented, and elevated into a unity of its own kind which is a match for the pressure of the natural world."[2]

It will at once be seen that this definition makes religion a more practical thing and also, in a certain sense, a more anthropocentric thing than any previous definition had ever made it. It arises, we are told, out of an acute practical distress and need on man's part, and the knowledge it offers us is not designed to satisfy our curiosity about creation and the Creator but to consolidate, secure, and enrich our own lives.

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[1] *Albrecht Ritschls Leben*, vol. II, p. 106.

[2] *Justification and Reconciliation*, vol. III, Eng. transl., p. 199.

The distinction here referred to between the world of nature and the realm of personality Lotze, it will be remembered, had spoken of as a distinction between existence and values (or sometimes, in his own modified Kantian terminology, as a distinction between 'the world of forms' and 'the world of values'). Of this new terminology Ritschl makes full use—a far fuller use than Lotze had ever essayed to do. Religion, he tells us, has to do with our consciousness of value, and is a faith in the reality of the objects to which that consciousness introduces us. All religious affirmations are thus essentially *judgments of value* (*Werturteile*). In giving utterance to this most famous of all his pronouncements Ritschl was, if not coining, at least introducing into general currency, a new term—the "Value-judgment."

Now Lotze, like Kant, had spoken as if a clear-cut and absolute distinction could be made between fact and value, the actual and the ideal, the 'is' and the 'ought to be.' Ritschl, however, has the signal merit of having been among the first to see clearly that this is not the case. He realises that our perception of facts is itself guided by some awareness of their value, that is, of their relevance to some human interest. There can be no description apart from some rudimentary kind of appreciation. Our attention to 'that which is' is directed by some elementary sense of 'that which ought to be'; and hence not even physical science can be carried on altogether apart from value-judgments. To meet this situation Ritschl distinguishes between *concomitant* and *independent* value-judgments. When we are investigating perceived facts, we are guided by some thought of their interest and value for us; and that is a concomitant value-judgment. But sometimes our interest is not in actual perceived fact at all but in an ideal order of things; and these direct affirmations of the ideal are independent value-judgments. Hence if we are properly to distinguish religious faith from scientific speculation, we must say that religion is born of *independent* value-judgments. In his own words:

> "Value-judgments are determinative in the case of all connected knowledge of the world, even when carried out in the most objective fashion.

> Attention during scientific investigation, and the impartial examination of the matter observed, always denote that such knowledge has a value for him who employs it. . . . Without interest we do not trouble ourselves about anything. We have therefore to distinguish between *concomitant* and *independent* value-judgments. The former are operative and necessary in all theoretical cognition. . . . Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments."[1]

It is true that this recognition of the practical motives that are present in scientific inquiry has been carried many degrees farther since Ritschl's day. Ritschl seems to think that the only value-judgment which accompanies or guides scientific knowledge may be that "which affirms the worth of impartial knowledge gained by observation." But this partiality for impartiality, this interest in taking no interest, this valuing of things apart from their value, has come to be strongly suspect among our latter-day thinkers, who have found more definitely utilitarian motives behind scientific procedure than were ever contemplated by Ritschl and his contemporaries. On the other hand Ritschl's central distinction between concomitant and independent value-judgments must still stand, unless we are to throw in our lot altogether with the Pragmatists, the essence of whose philosophy it is to maintain that all judgments of fact can be reduced, without remainder, to judgments of value.

Ritschl's usual form of statement is that "religious knowledge *consists in* independent value-judgments," and this way of speaking has sometimes given rise to serious misunderstanding; for it has been taken to mean that religion introduces us only to an ideal realm which has no existence apart from our own thoughts. This is, of course, a misunderstanding of the grossest kind; for it is precisely the *reality* of the ideal world (or world of values) that Ritschl, like Fichte and Lotze before him, is most anxious to insist upon. "Besides the reality of nature," he writes, in words which either of these might have penned, "theoretical knowledge must recognise as given the reality of spiritual life, and the equal binding force of the special laws which obtain in each realm."[2] To avoid this kind of misinterpretation, many of Ritschl's disciples, and notably Kaftan,[3] have preferred to speak of religious judgments not as being themselves judgments of value but rather as being based upon or grounded in such judgments. Faith, that is to say, does assert the reality of its own objects, but its conviction of their reality is always grounded in a prior recognition of their value. That this was Ritschl's own essential meaning cannot be doubted; for, as has been said, it is precisely with the relation of moral value to real existence that Ritschl believes all religion to be concerned. "In Christianity," he tells us, "religious knowledge consists in independent value-judgments, inasmuch as it deals with *the relation between the blessedness which is assured by God and sought by man, and the whole of the world which God has created and rules in harmony with His final end*."[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 204–205.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

[3] *Cf. Das Wesen der christlichen Religion*, 2 *Aufl.*, pp. 46 ff. As a whole, however, Kaftan's discussion seems inferior to Ritschl's own.

It is evident that in all this the Kantian point of view is being very closely adhered to, despite the new terminology of value in which it is expressed. The contrast is still between the world of external nature and the inner world of personality, just as for Kant it had been a contrast between "the starry heavens above" and "the moral law within." It is therefore natural that we should interpret the value-judgments from which religion is said to proceed as being in the last analysis *ethical* judgments. And for the most part Ritschl certainly encourages us to do so; for he always represents the values in question as being values of personality; and personality is, of course, an ethical conception. But there is one page in the third edition of *Justification and Reconciliation* which throws the whole matter into confusion by suggesting that, however closely ethical and religious values may become identified in the higher religions, still the spectacle of primitive religion forces us to recognise that moral value is one kind of value and religious value another.

> "Religious knowledge forms another class of independent value-judgments. That is, it cannot be traced back to the conditions which mark the knowledge belonging to moral will, for there exists religion which goes on without any relation whatever to the moral conduct of life. . . . For only at the higher stages do we find religion combined with the ethical conduct of life. Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world."[2]

It has been claimed[3] tha this passage was inserted by Ritschl into the third edition of his work under pressure from some of his friends and pupils who urged upon him the misguided view that the religion of the most primitive peoples bears no relation to their code of ethical values. However that may be, Pfleiderer[1] is quite undoubtedly right in calling it a *bedauerliche Verflachung*, a deplorable curtailment, of Ritschl's true position. And all the more notable of Ritschl's disciples, far from doing anything to belittle the organic nature of the relationship between religion and morality, have emphasised it in an even more thoroughgoing way than the master himself ever took direct occasion to do.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 207.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 205.

[3] With what authority I know not.

There remains now for Ritschl the question whether, or in what sense, the truths of religion are capable of *proof*. He is quite clear that the essential service which it is the business of theological scholarship to render to Christian faith is not to prove it but rather to *exhibit* it in a clear and systematic way. He writes:

> "Theology has performed its task when, guided by the Christian idea of God and the conception of men's blessedness in the Kingdom of God, it exhibits completely and clearly, both as a whole and in particular, the Christian view of the world and of human life, together with the necessity which belongs to the interdependent relations between its component elements."[2]

And he is also as clear as any of his predecessors in this way of thinking that there is no good in attempting to establish Christian truth by arguments drawn from any kind of natural-scientific cosmology. The passage just quoted proceeds thus:

> "It is incompetent for it to enter upon either a direct or an indirect proof of the truth of the Christian Revelation by seeking to show that it agrees with some philosophical or juridical view of the world; for to such Christianity simply stands opposed. And as often as systems even of monistic Idealism have asserted their agreement with Christianity, and its leading ideas have been worked up into a general philosophic view, the result has only been to demonstrate over again the opposition between even such systems and Christianity."[3]

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[1] See the first essay in his very unsympathetic book, *Die Ritschl'sche Theologie* (1891).

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

[3] *Ibid.* This statement about monistic Idealism, though perhaps an exaggeration, has much to justify it. It is well illustrated in the case of Spinoza, as a reading of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* will readily show. Compare also with the above the following passage from Fichte's early fragment of *Aphorisms on Religion:* "Es scheint allgemeines Bedürfniss des Menschen zu sein, in seinem Gotte gewisse Eigenschaften zu suchen, die der erste Schritt zur Speculation ihm *absprechen* muss. Diese wird ihm Gott als ein unveränderliches, keiner Leidenschaft fähiges Wesen zeigen; und sein

The reason for this incompetency is clear enough, and is to be found in the fact that religious faith, far from being grounded in a contemplation of the forces of environing nature, arises rather in despite of the results of such contemplation out of the self-assertion of the human soul.

> "In religious cognition the idea of God is dependent on the presupposition that man opposes himself to the world of nature, and secures his position in or over it by faith in God. Consequently no proof of God's existence starts properly save that which accepts as given man's self-distinction from nature, and his endeavours to maintain himself against it or over it."[1]

For this reason Ritschl agrees with Kant that religious faith cannot properly be used for the extension of scientific cosmology:

> "Since, whenever religion appears, it is subject to the presupposition that man opposes himself, as spirit, to surrounding nature, and to human society acting on him through the media of nature, it is a mistake to employ the idea of God as Author or Creator of the forces of nature in order to compel natural science, aware of its limits, to recognise God's existence."[2]

Indeed he goes farther—too far, as almost all his critics have judged—and declares that "there are no sufficient grounds for combining a theory of things in general with the conception of God."[3]

Is there, then, any kind of proof of Christianity which is consistent with a proper recognition of what religion essentially is? Ritschl's answer is that the only proof there can be is "an ethical proof."[4]

> "The scientific proof for the truth of Christianity ought only to be sought in the line of the thought already singled out . . . : 'Whosoever willeth to do the will of God, will know that the doctrine of Christ is true' (John 7: 17). . . . The theological exposition of Christianity, therefore, is complete when it has been demonstrated that the Christian ideal of life, and no other, satisfies the claims of the human spirit to knowledge of things universally."[5]

And, on the whole, Ritschl is prepared to accept the Kantian

Herz heischt einen Gott, der sich erbitten lasse, der Mitleiden, der Freundschaft fühle. Diese zeigt ihn als ein Wesen, das mit ihm und mit jedem Endlichen gar keinen Berührungspunct gemein habe; und jenes will einen Gott, dem es sich mittheilen, mit dem es sich gegenseitig modificieren könne." (*Sämmtliche Werke*, V, p. 3.) Any one acquainted with Fichte's life and thought will take "speculation" in this passage to mean especially Spinozistic monism.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

statement of this proof. After stating, in the passage already quoted, that "no proof of God's existence starts properly save that which accepts as given man's self-distinction from nature," he goes on to say that "this condition is satisfied in the case of the so-called moral argument, stated by Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*."[1] It is true that at this point there is once again the greatest uncertainty in his mind as to how far it is possible to follow the details of the Kantian view. And once again we find the most confusing changes being introduced into the second and third editions, so that the final form in which he leaves his statement appears to contain real self-contradiction.[2] Nevertheless on the main question at issue he is clear enough, as his final sentences show:

> "A review of the moral constitution of man, based upon the principles of Kant, will serve as the *ratio cognoscendi* of the validity of the Christian idea of God when employed as the solution of the enigma of the world. Such an argument would form a close analogy to the declaration of Christ (John 7: 17) that whoso willeth to do the will of God shall know whether His doctrine is of God or of merely human origin." [3]

And in a foot-note he very justly recommends those who are inclined to regard this result as a subordination of religion to morality to make a fresh study of the elementary distinction between the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi*.

That, then, is about as far as Ritschl takes us in the discussion of the more general questions that may be raised about religion. But we cannot take leave of this truly notable thinker without again reminding ourselves that he can be fairly judged only after a thorough acquaintance with the masterly pages in which he applies to the whole system of Christian doctrine the method which he never set himself to define or to justify save in the most hurried manner.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 219.

[2] See Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology* (1899), pp. 83–86; J. K. Mozley, *Ritschlianism* (1909), pp. 42–44; and the above-mentioned essay of Pfleiderer's. However, Professor H. R. Mackintosh kindly supplies me with the following note: "Much the most important reference here is C. Fabricius, *Die Entwicklung in Albrecht Ritschls Theologie*, pp. 112–117, where the passages from the various editions are set out in parallel columns."

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

Herrmann's Theory of Religion.

VII

Something of what is lacking in this account of Ritschl's thought may be filled out by a brief presentation of the teaching of his distinguished disciple, Wilhelm Herrmann. Herrmann's general view of religion coincides exactly with that of his master. In his first book, published in 1876, we find him writing as follows:

> "Every religious outlook is an answer to the question, What must the world be judged to be like, if the Highest Good is to be realised? With his hopes and his strivings the personal spirit of man is in unceasing conflict with nature. . . . But against the appearance that what his heart lives upon will go under in the course of nature, the religious man affirms that all his values (*die Summe seiner Güter*) are safe in the hand of his God."[1]

And in his view of the conditions of religious knowledge he follows Ritschl no less closely:

> "The interest of religion is not concerned with the representation of the given factual existence of the world as a coherent and intelligible unity. . . . Rather is religion concerned with the attempt to regard the multiplicity of the world as an ordered whole of means by which the immediately felt highest value of the religious man is realised."[2]

Thus in religious faith man "makes himself and his own ends the standard of the real nature of the world," and

> "it is plain that in this procedure there is involved a value-judgment, in which man and environing nature are compared and the latter is affirmed to be a means to the former, which is the valuable end."[3]

So man is made "the centre, round which the world closes in a circle"; for the man of faith is convinced that "the inmost nature of the world is in harmony with his own demand for self-maintenance."[4] Yet this "practical world-view of religion makes claim to absolute truth," for it is grounded on the recognition of the moral claim upon our wills:

> "Without such a claim religious conviction is not thinkable, since the judgment it makes about the world affirms that what is for man the unconditionally valuable is also a Power over all that happens."[5]

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[1] *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 8.
[2] *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit* (1879), p. 85.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Herrmann's account of the rise of religious conviction in the human soul is in many ways of the most absorbing interest. No writer of our time has made a braver attempt to set down clearly, and in the true order of knowledge, each successive step in the growth of his own "full assurance of faith." His statement almost takes the form of a personal confession, and at times it is of so poignantly faithful a character as to be well-nigh entitled to rank with a classic like Augustine's. He begins by taking the moral point of view for granted as the bed-rock of human certainty; and he dwells, almost as St. Paul would have done, upon the inevitableness of moral failure. Then he works out with great faithfulness the effect of such failure on the spirit of a truly earnest and conscientious man. He describes the grim moral struggle that must take place in such a man's soul—how day after day, year after year, he renews his efforts to be true to the high ideal of which he is conscious, and how always he falls short. There is, indeed, a certain hopelessness about such a man's case; for even as he attains, he sees ever beyond him further heights to which he has not attained, and therefore at no single moment is real success within his grasp. Thus the moral life, taken by itself, must needs bring unhappiness and unrest. It cannot bring a man to that inward harmony and peace with himself which alone is worthy to be called Life. And some men, realising this acutely, endeavour to avoid despair by doing what they can to stifle this insistent voice of conscience within them and taking an altogether more light-hearted view of life.

That, says Herrmann, might be the end of the story if it were not for the presence in the situation of a further element. We saw how, in the moment of moral decision, there always comes to the moral agent the consciousness that this decision does not suffice to put him at peace with himself, because further reaches of duty come into sight, so that "not in a single act but in a limitless series of moral decisions can a man grasp what manner of being moral obedience is going to make him." But in that moment of moral decision another thought comes to him too, and Herrmann, in his different writings and in the different editions of them, is always wrestling to express in clear terms what this thought is. In the third edition of his *Ethik* it is represented as a kind of suggestion that the Good is more than an ideal and is the ultimate Power in the universe; and if only this suggestion could be in some way substantiated, it would solve (and would indeed be the only possible solution of) his acute difficulty. In the fourth edition of the same work the thought is put a little differently and is represented as a persistent questioning whether the longing for a life that is at one with itself has not a deeper source than in the merely moral attitude. We feel that there is only one way out of that hopeless moral situation in which we are always at odds with ourselves, in which harmony and attainment are never ours—namely, to identify ourselves, in utter self-surrender, with a Reality and Power which possesses wholly that goodness which we ourselves lack. "With the asking of this question man is on the Way to Religion."

It is the Way to Religion, and yet, as Herrmann consistently teaches, it is a way that leads us only to the threshold of religious assurance and does not put the thing itself in the least degree within our grasp.

> "It is indeed true that in the moment of moral action one is always seized by the almightiness of the Good and to that extent enjoys religious experience. But can a man know himself to be seized by the almightiness of the Good because he thinks he realises that he cannot fulfil his duty unless he makes bold to rest on such a truth? From this realisation the conviction that a Good Will rules in all that is real cannot arise. When one confesses to oneself that one cannot walk without crutches, one does not thereby prove that one *has* crutches but only that one is lame."

This passage is from the third edition of the *Ethik;*[1] in the fourth the matter is somewhat less uncompromisingly stated. On the whole Herrmann's position may be said to be that to the morally earnest man, in the moment of his choosing the better part, the thought inevitably and hauntingly comes of an Almighty Goodness; but that, though on the one hand he cannot rid himself of this thought, on the other hand he cannot adequately assure himself that it represents anything of an objective kind.

To this extent, then, Herrmann dissociates himself from Kant. He insists that there can be no question of a moral *proof* of religion. All morality can do is to prepare us for religion, to bring us to that point in our spiritual development where we see clearly that religion alone can save us from despair. But on the other hand there is nothing else but morality that can even bring us so far. Religious assurance never comes to a man who is not morally ready to receive it. And to a man who is thus ready, having reached this *impasse* in his moral struggle, it comes with a certain inevitableness. It precisely meets his need and solves his problem. But still it comes, as it were, from without him; not as something evolved from his own moral will but as a gift and a surprise.

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[1] P. 77.

Whence then does it come? At this point Herrmann's statement becomes even more of a personal psychological analysis than it was before. It is as if he said: "I will tell you how it came to *me;* and I know of no other way in which it *can* come to anybody." It comes, he tells us, when a man whose moral situation is such as has been described meets with the historical fact of the personality or inner life of Jesus. Let us, when we reach that crisis in our own inner life, read the Gospels, using our knowledge of Christian history and of the Christian manhood about us as a commentary, and then somehow, as we read, a tremendous experience breaks upon us. The majesty of this Man's personality grips us. We are bowed down in shame before Him. And yet He does not, as it were, leave us bowed down. We soon feel that we are being *lifted up* too. Exultation begins to mingle with our shame. From the great Goodness and Purity that here meet us there comes to us new life, new hope, new confidence. Our great need is being exactly met.

And at the same time we know, says Herrmann, that it is *God* who thus smites us down and is raising us up. "Under the impression which Jesus makes upon us there arises in our hearts the certainty that God Himself is turning towards us in this experience."[1] More fully:

> "If we then yield to His [Jesus'] attraction and come to feel with deep reverence how His strength and purity disclose to us the impurity and weakness of our souls, then His mighty claim comes home to us. We learn to share His inevitable confidence that He can uplift and bless perfectly those who do not turn away from Him. In this confidence in the Person and cause of Jesus is implied the idea of a Power greater than all things, which will see to it that Jesus, who lost His life in this world, shall be none the less victorious over the world. The thought of such a Power lays hold of us as firmly as did the impression of the Person of Jesus by

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[1] *The Communion of the Christian with God*, Eng. transl., 3d ed., p. 83.

> which we were overwhelmed. It is the beginning of the consciousness within us that there is a living God. . . . The man who has felt these simple experiences cannot possibly attribute them to any other source. . . . The idea of a Power supreme over all things wins a marvellous vividness for us because we are obliged to pay to Jesus the homage of believing that He must certainly succeed, even if all the world besides be against Him."[1]

At this point the reader feels impelled to press the question as to what exactly it is in the impression made by Jesus upon us which gives us ground for believing that a God is here acting upon us through the medium of this historical memory. Herrmann answers as follows:

> "Under the impression that Jesus makes upon us, there arises in our hearts the certainty that God Himself is turning towards us in this experience. If we now ask, 'How is it possible that so mighty an utterance should be spoken to us in the fact that Jesus stands before us as an undeniable part of what is real to ourselves?' or, 'How can this fact become for us the intimation wherein God discloses Himself to us in His reality and power?' these questions can be answered only by the fact itself, and by what it undeniably contains."[2]

Yet this hardly satisfies us, and it is difficult not to feel that at this point the clarity of Herrmann's analysis becomes somewhat fogged. If the impression made by Jesus really evokes faith in God, then it would seem that such faith must have its reasonable and logical grounds in certain aspects of that impression. Sometimes we do seem to catch sight in Herrmann's pages of such a ground, as when he says, in a passage quoted above, that we feel "obliged to pay to Jesus the homage of believing that He must certainly succeed." That phrase, indeed, may well be held to provide all the clue that is needed to a true answer. Is it possible, we may ask ourselves, to look upon such goodness and purity as His, and to believe that they count for nothing at all in the ultimate scheme of things? Only, if we put it thus, the thought will inevitably follow that *all* goodness and purity, as manifested even in the imperfect virtue of the men and women around us, must lead in their measure to the same conclusion. And that Herrmann will not have. Our own personalities, he seems to say, may raise the question; the personality of Jesus alone provides the answer. Quite consistently he refuses to universalise the grounds of the Christian conviction. They are as unique as they are incommunicable.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

That, then, represents the nearest approach there can be to a proof of Christianity. Incommunicable in itself, Christian faith has two "meeting-points" with universal human experience—the fact that it provides the only solution to the *impasse* to which our common moral consciousness leads us, and the fact that it is evoked by the contemplation of a chapter of human history which is accessible to us all.

> "The Christian's consciousness that God communes with him rests on two objective facts, the *first* of which is the historical fact of the Person of Jesus. . . . The *second* objective ground . . . is that we hear within ourselves the demand of the moral law. . . . There are no other objective grounds for the truth of the Christian religion."[1]

To the morally prepared man who is brought face to face with the historic Jesus, Christianity needs no proof, while to the man in whose case these conditions are not fulfilled no proof of it is available.

It is impossible not to be impressed by the psychological depth and truthfulness of this analysis. Perhaps the process by which Christian conviction develops in the soul has never been so faithfully set forth. Nor has there been any more distinguished contribution made to theology in our time than that made by Herrmann in the two volumes from which we have been quoting,[2] and the varied riches of which have been but poorly represented in our very meagre summary. Yet there is one critical point where Herrmann does not satisfy us.

Our difficulty may perhaps be best expressed in terms of his statement, just quoted, that Christian faith in God "rests on two objective facts"—the historical fact of Jesus and the fact of our consciousness of duty's claim. Now, in saying this, Herrmann does not mean that faith rests on these facts as on its logical premises. Faith, he seems to say, has no logical premises but is an unreasoned conviction that takes hold of the soul under certain conditions. The "two objective facts" are these conditions, and are therefore the necessary antecedents of faith, though not its grounds. It is, however, a serious question whether Herrmann, by thus refusing to allow that the final step leading to faith can be represented as an act of intelligent insight, has not in effect robbed faith altogether of that connection with the objective world which he had been at such pains to give it. He has broken the chain of reasoned insight at a critical point; and when we proceed beyond that point, are we not as surely loosened from our moorings in objectivity as if the chain had never been forged? What boots it that the far end of the chain is firmly fastened to earth if between it and us one link be entirely missing?

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103.

[2] In writing the above summary I have had before me the third and fourth editions of the *Ethik* and the third English edition of *Communion with God*.

We feel, therefore, constrained to agree, as against Herrmann, with what is on the whole the teaching of Kant, that the moral experience is not merely a necessary chronological antecedent of religious belief but in some sort also its logical ground.

What then about the other fact on which Herrmann conceives faith to rest, the fact of Jesus? The answer must surely be that this is not really *another* fact at all. The experience of the inner life of Jesus is but the moral experience itself in a supreme exemplification of it. It is the same word; but it is the Word made flesh. If we had but eyes to behold it, the Divine Love is sufficiently revealed to us in our common human values; and that revelation alone leaves godlessness, as Paul says, "without excuse."[1] But "value resides in the individual" rather than in the abstract and general, and hence our values become both deepened and fortified by every new incarnation of them that meets us in experience. So to our human frailty there have from time to time been granted certain more "special" revelations of the Divine Love. Supreme among such has been the revelation of God in the soul of Jesus. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto our fathers, hath now spoken unto us through a more perfect Love and Goodness than any that had come before. In this Love and Goodness men have found, limned freshly and in firmer lines, "the portrait of the invisible God."[2] For with this, as (in its measure) with every, deepening and strengthening of our human values, there has gone a firmer and clearer assurance of that Divine Reality whose terrene ministers they proclaim themselves to be.

The real source of this new difference with Herrmann thus lies in the same tendency of his thought from which we found it necessary to dissociate ourselves at a much earlier point[1] in our inquiry—the tendency to make far too rigid and radical a separation between the grounds of Christian faith and the grounds of religious faith in general. For such a separation there seems to be warrant neither in Christian history nor in present Christian experience.

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[1] Romans I: 20, II: 15.

[2] Col. I: 15.

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[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 57–62.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AS GROUNDED IN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS OF VALUE: A RECONSTRUCTIVE STATEMENT

The Organic Nature of the Relation Between Religion and Morality.

It must now be our business to do what we can towards a restatement and further elaboration and defence of the general theory of religion represented by all the great names of the foregoing chapter. If this should seem too bold an endeavour, we may take refuge in George Herbert's proverb that "a dwarf on a giant's shoulders sees farther of the two."[1]

At an earlier point in our inquiry we found occasion to make passing reference to two very clearly observable characters which seemed to attach to all religious belief—its practical relevance and its apparent obligatoriness; and we then promised to discuss these more fully later on.[2] We cannot make a better beginning with the present chapter than by redeeming that promise.

Perhaps by saying merely that all religious knowledge has a practical relevance or reference we do not sufficiently express the truth that we have here in mind; for there is no doubt a sense in which all human knowledge has a practical relevance and reference. The point to be insisted on is rather that, while all knowledge is relevant to *some* end of desire and action, religious knowledge has the distinguishing mark of always being relevant to our *ultimate* ends of desire and action. And that is the same as to say that it is relevant to our *ethical* ends, and that no knowledge or belief can be regarded as authentically religious in character unless it possesses this ethical relevance.

The insight with which we have here to do is, as has been said, a peculiarly modern one. It was characteristic of the mediæval period to treat knowledge as forming one seamless whole, and all the knowledge then existing was taken to be in some sort a part of religion and to be involved in ecclesiastical orthodoxy. The Renaissance and Reformation, though they did something to shake this view, yet in the main left it standing as before. But during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it came to be felt by an ever-increasing number of the foremost thinkers that no article of knowledge had any right to be put forward in the name of religion unless it bore some direct relation to our duties. The literature of the so-called "Deistic" movement appears to us now to be full of crudities and immaturities, but its deepest motive really lay in its passionate insistence upon the valuelessness of everything in religion that was not ethically orientated, and in this respect it is almost impossible to exaggerate the deep mark it has left on our current ways of thinking. Nowadays we take up tractates like Arthur Bury's *The Naked Gospel,* published in 1690, or John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious,* published six years later, and we laugh at their rawness; yet they all had their share in forming the common wisdom that we now inherit. Indeed in a passage like the following (which we may select from Toland's book as typical of the whole Deistic outlook) we may already find something of the true insight, as well as of the one-sidedness, of that later Protestant and Ritschlian historiography whose greatest monument is Harnack's *History of Dogma:*

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[1] See his *Jacula Prudentum*

[2] *Vide supra*, pp. 183 f.

> "When once the Philosophers thought it their Interest to turn Christian, Matters grew every day worse and worse; for they not only retain'd the Air, the Genius, and sometimes the garb of their several Sects, but most of their erroneous Opinions too. And while they intended to employ their Philosophy in Defence of Christianity, they so confounded them together, that what before was plain to everyone, did now become intelligible only to the Learned, who made it still less evident by their Litigious Disputes and vain Subtleties."[1]

These Deists were champions of "natural religion," but by the beginning of the nineteenth century we find the same points being argued in the interest of "revealed religion." In his little treatise entitled *Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion,* published in 1820, we find Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen, arguing that "this is the first reasonable test of the truth of a religion—that it should coincide with the *moral* constitution of the human mind," or more fully, that "the reasonableness of a religion seems to me to consist in there being a direct and natural connection between a believing the doctrines which it inculcates and a being formed to the character which it recommends." "What," he asks, "is the history of another world to me, unless it have some relation to my duties and happiness?" Or again:

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[1] 1st ed., p. 161. We may recall the fact that Harnack's smaller *Dogmengeschichte* opens with this sentence: "Religion is a practical affair of humanity, for it is concerned with blessedness and *power* to lead a holy life."

> "The hallowed purpose of restoring men to the lost image of their Creator is in fact the very soul and spirit of the Bible; and whenever this object does not distinctly appear, the whole system becomes dead and useless. In creeds and confessions this great purpose is not made to stand forth with its real prominency; its intimate connection with the different articles of faith is not adverted to; the point of the whole argument is thus lost, and Christianity is misapprehended to be a mere list of mysterious facts. . . . Any person who draws his knowledge of the Christian doctrines exclusively or principally from such sources must run considerable risk of losing the benefit of them, by overlooking their moral objects."[1]

In our own day this insistence upon the necessarily practical character of religious knowledge, and upon the necessary reference of all its articles to our ultimate moral needs, has become so familiar in theological literature that it would be tedious to adduce particular examples of it. We shall therefore content ourselves with quoting one passage which we select both because of its close resemblance to what Erskine wrote a century earlier and because it has perhaps something more than individual authority behind it. It is taken from the noteworthy report of the religion of the British army during the Great War which was published under the title *The Army and Religion,* and is as follows:

> "The same is true of every one of the great truths of Christianity. Men need to believe them in order to live the full life of love and faith and hope, or, which is the same thing, in order to solve the problem of evil. They have all been revealed relative to some vital human need . . . . We have to remove a vast misunderstanding that Christianity has little to do with real every-day life. . . . The one way to do this, so far as the great majority is concerned, is to show what the Christian ideal really is, and to teach each of the Christian truths relatively to the moral necessities which that ideal creates. We have so to state them that each one comes as a veritable Gospel of deliverance."[2]

It is from this central reference which it always has to duty that another noteworthy mark of all religious knowledge is to be explained—namely, the *urgency* of it. The truly religious judgment may indeed be almost infallibly recognised by its possession of this mark. It is put forward not merely as an interesting item of information but as a matter of life and death. It addresses itself not to the love of knowledge nor to any such particular and partial interest but to the soul's desire to live. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—it is in such terms as these that religion has always spoken, and it is in its ability to use such terms that its great power and authority in the world have lain. But now the further distinguishing mark of *obligatoriness* attaching to all religious belief is nothing more than the reverse side of this sense of urgency. The presence in religion of a *Verpflichtungsgefühl* has often been made the object of comment.[1] Sometimes it has been caricatured, as in the lines:

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[1] § IV. The other quotations are from the Introduction and § III.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 287.

> ". . . I know one may be damn'd
> For hoping no one else may e'er be so."[2]

And no doubt it does represent a side of religion that is peculiarly open to abuse. But it is nevertheless a side of it that is vital to its very conception. Indeed it may be said that no item of knowledge, however surely true it may seem to be, and however valuable and useful it may be for other purposes, can have a legitimate place in our religious creed unless it is of such a nature that we feel morally bound to believe it and to embrace it with whole-hearted self-surrender. And from this point of view religion might almost be defined as consisting of those beliefs about which men feel that *it would be wicked not to believe them*[3]—or, in older words, that "he that believeth not is condemned already."

We have dwelt upon these very plainly discernible aspects of religious belief—its relevance to our practical living, the sense of urgency attaching to it and the feelings of responsibility and obligation we have with reference to it, because they all seem to point inevitably to the same conclusion—the existence of an organic and all-determinative relationship between religion and morality. All these marks of religious belief are in the first place marks of the moral point of view. But indeed are we not all in our own hearts, and quite apart from any adduction of particular proofs, aware that in our religious life it is the moral point of view that we are bound to adopt, and that in religion and morality (however great and significant be the difference between them) we are moving in the same world of ideas and finding scope for the same side of our nature—or rather not for a *side* of it but for its only true centre and axis?

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[1] *Cf.* Troeltsch, *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie*, p. 43; and the essay on *Responsibility in Religious Belief* in von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (first series).

[2] Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*.

[3] Here lies the element of truth in M. Salomon Reinach's otherwise sufficiently stupid definition of religion as "a collection of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties" (*Orpheus*, Eng. transl., p. 4), as also in an early definition of M. Durkheim's: "*Les phénomènes dits religieux consistent en croyances obligatoires connexes de pratiques définies qui se rapportent à des objets donnés dans ces croyances.*"—*L'Année Sociologique*, vol. II. *Cf.* the note in his *Elementary Forms*, Eng. transl., p. 47.

II

Objection from the (Supposed) Narrowness of the Moral Outlook.

There are, however, several different grounds on which difficulty is still frequently felt regarding the recognition of an organic and constitutive relationship between religion and morality, and with these we must deal somewhat fully before proceeding further.

1 First comes an objection which need not hold us long, because we have already dealt with it in part. It is simply the feeling which some will have that we are doing something to impoverish the religious consciousness by linking it up in an exclusive and indissoluble way with the moral point of view. It will be said, perhaps, that such a purely moralistic interpretation of religion has only occasionally appeared in the world, and then only as a declension from religion's highest meaning. Whereas in general (it will be asked) has it not rather fallen to the lot of religion to soften the rigour and hardness of the moral point of view, and to carry us beyond its frigid machinery of rights and duties, commandments and restrictions? Is it not the pride and power of religion to announce to us that 'if we be led of the Spirit, we are not under the law,' and to lift us up to a region where 'that is dead wherein we were held'?

That there is profound truth in these great Pauline declarations we shall fully acknowledge in good time and proper place, but at present we need only point out that they can be effectively quoted not against our view that religion and morality are organically related to one another but only against the view that these are one and the same thing. For whatever 'living in the Spirit' means, it certainly does not imply any departure from the severest moral standards but rather a heightening of them—according to the word of Jesus that "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven";[1] and it were better to forget the Pauline teaching altogether than to take it in this unethical sense. And as for this line of objection generally, we cannot but feel that its point is not really made against the view of religion which unites religion with morality but rather against a certain narrow and rigoristic view of morality itself. If there was anything wrong with Pharisaism and Puritanism, it was not that their religion was too moral so much as that their morality was too legalistic. Of course it is true that religion may be too 'moralistic' in the sense of not doing sufficient justice to that element in religious experience which goes beyond 'mere morality'; and this ticklish-sounding distinction between moral religion (which is the best religion) and moralistic religion (which represents a declension) is doubtless one source of confusion in this whole matter. But a far deeper source of misunderstanding is the quite unwarranted (and indeed outrageous) depreciatory sense that is nowadays sometimes given to the word morality. There is indeed a reason for this depreciation—for morality has not infrequently been betrayed by some who thought themselves its best friends; but the reason is not really an excuse. In one of Mr. Galsworthy's plays, for example, there occurs the following very amusing and instructive dialogue:

> "*Bill:* If you think I care two straws about the morality of the thing——
> *Harold:* Oh! my dear old man! Of course not!
> *Bill:* It's simply that I shall feel such a d——d skunk, if I leave her in the lurch."[2]

If Bill prefers to speak of feeling a d——d skunk at leaving a girl in the lurch, instead of speaking of conscience and morality, there is perhaps no reason why he should not have his way; but let him not suppose that his meaning is in any wise different. Morality is after all but the art of living. It is that from which flow our *mores*. It stands for the control exercised upon our lives by our ultimate ends and ideals. It does not mean one particular way of living or one particular view of life but whatever way of living is right and good and whatever view of life is true. Our moral consciousness is but a convenient name for our awareness of those values which we feel bound to make ultimate in the guidance of conduct, and if the longer phrase is less open to misunderstanding, then by all means let it be the one we use.

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[1] Matt. 5:20.

[2] *The Eldest Son*, Act III.

The objection that by too exclusively associating religion with morality we are unwarrantably narrowing its scope is, however, frequently pressed upon us from another quarter, namely, from the quarter of the artists. Morality, we are told, is only one avenue of approach to religious insight and conviction, and *art* is another.

This form of the objection is worthy of our close attention, yet it is in good part the fruit of the self-same elementary confusion of thought which we found to be responsible for the other forms of it. For whatever be the truth—and the present state of æsthetical science makes it difficult to say what is the truth—about the relation of æsthetic to moral values, they cannot possibly be regarded as forming simply two independent and mutually exclusive spheres, each of which sets a limit to the range of the other. It is completely to misread the moral consciousness to suppose that it deals only with one kind of value, one kind of good, one kind of thing that is worth seeking or having or doing; on the contrary, its business is rather to instruct us as to the relative importance of all particular values, and so to show us what things are *ultimately* valuable and good, and what things are worth seeking and having and doing *in the end.* If morality is less than the whole of life, it is only as having characteristically to do with ultimate, as distinguished from proximate, ends of desire.[1]

While therefore we should eagerly accept the view that religion may be approached through art, we should not for a moment admit that it can be reached by any art that is independent of morality. Indeed we should claim it rather as the teaching of experience that in so far as artistic appreciation is developed in any kind of self-sufficient isolation from our deepest ethical standards—from standards of character and service—its tendency is rather to estrange the mind from the characteristic outlooks and insights of religion than to draw it towards them. The endeavour to develop our artistic susceptibilities in isolation from the other sides of our nature is what we know (in a depreciatory sense) as æstheticism, and there is hardly any mood of mind which is further away from the Kingdom of Heaven than just this one. The more we tend to treat art as if it were the whole of life the more selfish and morbid a thing is it likely to become; and selfishness and morbidity are not likely to lead us into sympathy with anything that is religious. Art may indeed be an avenue to God, but the same can hardly be said of "art for art's sake."

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[1] I know of no statement of the relation of art to morals with which I am more inclined to agree than that of Rashdall in the long note or appendix in his *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. I, pp. 177–183. As he says: "If the moral judgment is essentially a judgment of value, its sphere must be absolutely all-embracing. . . . People in whom æsthetic interests are stronger than ethical interests frequently attempt to set up a sphere of Art to which Morality is supposed to have no relation whatever. Such persons simply show that they have too narrow a view of what Morality is." A not dissimilar view is followed by Professor John Laird in his recent book, *A Study of Moral Theory*. "In the first place," he says, "every kind of value entails an injunction which

Our claim would accordingly be that it is only in so far as our appreciation of beauty is brought into the most intimate relationship with our general consciousness of the Good that it is likely to awaken within us any kind of religious insight. Art can only become religious by first becoming ethical. There is no way —not even for the artist—*round* duty to God, but only *through* duty. And consequently it is doubtful whether we are at all right in speaking of art, taken by itself, as a source of religious insight or a means of reaching God; seeing that, when taken quite by itself, it is more likely to lead us away from Him, and that only when fused most intimately together with something greater than itself can it lead us towards Him. The truth is that we are not likely to find God in art unless we have already found Him in our life as a whole. And this is but another aspect and application of the truth which became clear to us at a much earlier stage of our inquiry, namely, that we are not likely to find God in Nature unless we have already found Him in that which is

plainly is moral. In the second place moral values seem to have authority over all others." (P. 51.) The values of truth and beauty thus give rise to imperatives no less than the values of moral excellence, but "the kinds of these imperatives may conflict; and morality, which, on the one hand, admits their authority, claims, on the other hand, to override the authority of any one of them (except its own) for sufficient reason. The scientific or the artistic conscience, as we have seen, *is* a conscience; yet the general or moral conscience asserts its claim to be suzerain over both." (P. 54.) Of art Professor Laird says: " 'Art for art's sake' may similarly be overridden, although this maxim is usually the 'last superstition' of enlightened critics." (P. 55.)

greater than Nature. The appreciation of beauty is a thing very nearly related to our perception (or *æsthēsis*) of the natural world, and as we said of the one, so we may now say of the other, that its contribution to religion is to provide it not with argument but with sacrament.

Objection from the supposedly Non-Ethica Character of Primitive Religion.

III

We must now deal with a difficulty of a very different order. Do not (it will be asked of us) the facts of primitive religion effectively block any attempt to regard religion as inherently ethical in nature, or as standing in organic relation to the moral consciousness? Is it not well known that among savage peoples religion appears as a non-moral or even as an antimoral force? It is true that in Christianity, and perhaps in some other religious systems of an advanced kind, religion has characteristically gone hand in hand with good conduct, but (our objector will proceed) is not this rather the *differentia* of the higher religions than a property of religion in general? Is it not precisely in virtue of its being, by exception, an ethical religion that Christianity is marked off from most of the other religions? And when insistence is laid, as has here been done, upon the practical and ethical relevance of all genuinely religious beliefs, is not the meaning merely that religious belief *ideally ought* to be characterised by this relevance, and not that it usually or always has been? In other words, have we not here to do rather with a suggested reform of religion than with a theory as to its invariable and essential nature?

Now it is true that fifty years ago it was very difficult indeed to know how to meet these objections, because at that time explorers and missionaries were still fond of emphasising the essential immorality of the religion of primitive peoples. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*[1] was still a favourite text among investigators. So far, it was claimed, are the cults of Africa and Melanesia, or even of India and China, from having any positive connection with morality that they are actually a hindrance to the progress of moral ideas, fostering many crimes and malpractices—like cannibalism and the Hindu *suttee*—which are profoundly shocking to the conscience. Sometimes, indeed, this apparent detachment of the earlier forms of religion from morality has been welcomed with open arms, as, for instance, by the adherents of the various "Ethical Movements" which during the last quarter of the nineteenth century sought altogether to separate from the pure gold of the moral consciousness what they regarded as the dross of religious belief. "For four thousand years, the world over," writes Dr. Stanton Coit, "there have been religions of which the 'object' was anything but moral. If deities were essentially moral, how are we to explain the indubitable fact of history that there has taken place in many religions a gradual moralisation of deity? The moralisation of deity is an importation into religion of what is alien to it."[1] The commoner case has, however, been that of writers who stood stanchly for the union of morality and religion but who, because they could not see how to evade the apparent fact of the non-moral character of pagan religions, had to content themselves with the more modest claim that religion ought in the future to forge between itself and morality that link of indissoluble connection which must be admitted to have been lacking in the past. In the foregoing chapter we found Ritschl himself, at least in one passage, being forced to content himself with this reduced view,[2] and many passages of the same purport might be quoted from the eighteenth-century Deists.

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[1] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, I, 101.

Of recent years, however, it has gradually come to be recognised that the earlier modern observers of the religious life of primitive societies were all more or less guilty of an elementary confusion of thought. They all more or less made the mistake of comparing the savage's faith not with the savage's conscience but with their *own* conscience—the conscience, that is to say, of civilised and modern Europe. They expected primitive religion to reveal an affinity not with primitive morality but with our current Christian morality; and they expressed their surprise that this it did not seem to do. This blunder may have been a very natural one in the days when men believed that "conscience cannot be educated" and that the interior moral standards of the most primitive peoples, from Adam downward, had in consequence always been the same as ours now are; but that it was a blunder is not now seriously questioned. The inquiry with which the modern observer faces the primitive cults of the world is therefore a very different one. Do they, he asks, accord with and embody the highest values of the men who practise them? Is the savage's religion expressive of the things that matter most to the savage himself? Does he conceive it as insuring his most cherished possessions against the ravages of fate, and as giving him his own heart's desire? And does he conceive of his gods in terms of those qualities and characters which he esteems most highly in his fellow men?

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[1] From an essay by Dr. Coit in *Aspects of Ethical Religion*, edited by H. J. Bridges (New York, 1926). I have slightly abbreviated Dr. Coit's words.

[2] See above, pp. 287 f.

All these questions are nowadays commonly answered with a very emphatic affirmative. One of the earliest writers to have clear insight on the matter was Robertson Smith, who as early as 1889 was found emphasising the essentially practical character of early Semitic religion and the relevance of all its teaching to the actual conduct of life. "What is requisite to religion," he assured us, "is a practical acquaintance with the rules on which the deity acts and on which he expects his worshippers to frame their conduct—what in II Kings 17:26 is called the 'manner,' or rather the 'customary law' (*mishpat*) of the god of the land. . . . When the prophets speak of the knowledge of God, they always mean a practical knowledge of the laws and principles of His government in Israel."[1] And since Robertson Smith's time this general contention has constantly been gathering strength from new quarters. Quite recently, indeed, the tendency among anthropologists has been to speak of the primitive union between religion and morality in an even exaggerated way, as if it were a question of identity rather than of organic relationship. This is true especially of that most influential of all recent inquirers into the religion of the primitives, Émile Durkheim. Nobody could be more unhesitating than he is in his assertion of the most intimate possible connection between the half-formed totemic cults, which are the religion of those Australian bushmen whose life he has studied so diligently, and their *mores,* which is to say, their codes of social behaviour. And while we shall, in the immediate sequel, have occasion to dissent from his tendency to dissolve this connection into something too like sheer identity, we cannot but welcome his clear perception of the connection itself. "The totem," he tells us, "is the source of the moral life of the clan. . . . So while the totemic principle is a social force, it is also a moral power."[1] He is accordingly able to make the generalisation concerning the nature of religion as a whole that "its principal object is to act upon the moral life,"[2] and that "its real function is not to make us think, not to enrich our knowledge, nor to add to the conceptions which we owe to science others of another origin and another character, but rather it is to make us act, to aid us to live."[3] And, once again, it is clearly irrelevant to ask whether many crimes have not been committed in the name of totemism, if we mean only acts that we should now consider to be crimes. Many acts that we should now consider to be crimes of the most heinous character have been committed in the name of Christianity—which even our objectors, or at all events most of them, allow to be an ethical religion. And for that matter, are there not as many dreadful crimes that have been committed in the name of moral principle itself?[4]

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[1] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 23; and the whole chapter is worth consulting.

But is there then no truth in the view, owing its currency to the influence of Schleiermacher, which regards Christianity as being the ethical religion *par excellence?* If all religion is in its very nature ethical, then is there no remaining sense in which it can be true that Christianity is more ethical in character than this or that other cult? The main part of the answer lies in seeing that Christianity is pre-eminently ethical not in the sense that it bears a closer relation to the *ethos* of its adherents than do other cults to the *ethos* of theirs but rather in the sense

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[1] *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Eng. transl., p. 190.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

[4] I may here append a few other references to the recent literature on the subject. The modern view is well put by R. G. Collingwood in his *Religion and Philosophy* (1916), though I find myself out of sympathy with not a little that this volume contains. A few sentences may be set down. "Historically speaking, religions may have been guilty of infinite crimes; but this condemnation is a proof, rather than a disproof, that their fundamental aim is moral. They represent a continual attempt to conform to the good-will of God, and the fact that they err in determining or in obeying that will does not alter the fact that the standard by which they test actions is a moral standard." (P. 23.) "What we mistake for an absence of morality is really the presence of a different morality. Primitive religion does not inculcate civilised morality; why should it? It inculcates primitive morality; and as the one grows, the other grows too." (P. 25.)

Another valuable statement is that of Professor W. McDougall in his *Social Psychology*. "It has been contended by some authors that religion and morality were primitively distinct, and that the intimate connection commonly obtaining between them in civilised societies arose comparatively late in the course of social development. This contention, which is opposed to the view of religious development sketched in the that the *ethos* to which it is thus related is a higher *ethos* than that to which other religions are related. It is true of all religion that it expresses the highest values known to the worshipper; with this qualification only, that the application of a newly discovered social value to so conservative a thing as religion constantly tends to lag a little way behind its recognition in the social sphere itself. But the highest values known to this or that worshipper (whose religion we may be studying) may not be the highest values known to us, the observers; we may know ways of living that are more moral than his *mores*. And hence, from our higher and more privileged point of view, we may justly claim that our religion is a more moral or ethical one than his. But there is also another point that may be made. Though it is indeed of the proper nature and genius of religion to be ethical through and through, yet it may well be that one of the perils chiefly besetting it is a certain loosening of the bonds that bind it to our highest moral values. Partly there may be a tendency (as has just been said) to allow our religion to lag behind our moral development, and partly also a tendency to import into it alien elements from this or that external quarter. And so it may be true that only when religion is at its very best and purest is the direct relevance of all its parts to the moral business of life exhibited in anything like a perfect form.

Religion Defined as a Moral Trust in Realit

IV

So far we have been insisting upon the organic nature of the connection between our religious faith and our ethical ideals.

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foregoing pages, is true only if we attach an unduly narrow meaning to the words 'religion' and 'morality.' Although many of the modes of conduct prescribed by primitive and savage custom and enforced by supernatural sanctions are not such as we regard as moral, and are in many cases even detrimental to the simple societies in which such customs obtain, and so cannot be justified by any utilitarian principle, yet we must class the observance of such custom as moral conduct. For the essence of moral conduct is the performance of social duty, the duty prescribed by society, as opposed to the mere following of the promptings of egoistic impulses. If we define moral conduct in this broad sense—and this is the only satisfactory definition of it—then, no matter how grotesque and, from our point of view, how immoral the prescribed codes of conduct of other societies may appear to be, we must admit conformity to the code to be moral conduct; and we must admit that religion from its first crude beginnings was bound up with morality in some such way as we have briefly sketched; that the two things, religion and morality, were not at first separate and later fused together; but that they were always intimately related, and have reciprocally acted and reacted upon one another throughout the course of their evolution." (Pp. 312–313.)

Reference may also be made to Irving King's *The Development of Religion*, pp. 288 ff.

Religion and morality, we have argued, go hand in hand; they spring from a single psychological source; they concern the same side of our natures; we have a common interest at stake in each.

But are we then simply to *identify* religion with morality?

In our own day there are not a few who would answer this question in the affirmative. Religion and morality, they would say, are in the last resort, and when stripped of all fortuitous adhesions, but two names for one and the same thing.

The first thinker of distinction to adopt a view in any way approximating to this was Auguste Comte, whose *Philosophie positive* was published between 1830 and 1842. There is a real sense in which Comte ultimately derives from Kant, and it is probable that there never would have been a Positive Philosophy had there not first been a Critical Philosophy; but with Kant's final view of religion Comte had no sympathy at all. In itself, he contends, the spirit of piety has no inherent or essential connection with any superhuman reality but is concerned only with the social ordering of human society itself. Humanity is its only God, its only *Grand Être* and object of worship. He allows it to be true that the religion of the past has invariably lifted its gaze beyond and above human society, and has centred its faith and hope in an extra-social reality, a superhuman Deity who made all things work together for the good of His worshippers. But he looks upon this 'theological' tendency as being but a passing stage which religion must eventually outgrow, and which is indeed already beginning to give place to a 'sociological,' or, as he prefers to call it, 'sociocratic,' type of piety.

> "If the adoration of fictitious powers was morally indispensable, as long as the true *Grand Être* that rules our lives could not clearly manifest himself, now at least it would tend to turn us away from the sole worship that can improve us. Those who would prolong it at the present day are forgetting its legitimate purpose, which was simply to direct provisionally the evolution of our best feelings, under the regency of God during the long minority of Humanity."[1]

Comte's sociological theory of religion has found numerous echoes in the literature of many countries during the last hundred years, but in few cases has anything been added to it that is really new. It has, however, recently been subjected to a striking further development—which is in effect a great simplification—at the hands of Comte's own countryman, M. Durkheim. What M. Durkheim does is to deny that there ever was a superhuman 'Regent' in religion—or at least that he was ever there by anything more than a confusion of thought. It is precisely among the most primitive peoples, he claims, that the purely sociocratic nature of religion is most evident. At heart, religion has never been anything but the response produced in the mind of the individual by the thought of the social organism to which he belongs. Humanity's earliest god was the clan. "The god of the clan," he writes, "the totemic principle, can be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable which serves as totem."[1] It is well known that in France there is now a considerable school of writers who profess a view of this kind, a school mainly grouped around the publication called *L'Année Sociologique,* and represented by the distinguished names of M. Lévy-Bruhl, M. Hubert, and M. Mauss, as well as by that of M. Durkheim himself. In Germany what is essentially the Comtist view has been vigorously championed by the Marburg school of Neo-Kantians headed by Hermann Cohen. Good Kantians as in other respects they claim to be, they resolutely deny to religion the *Transzendenzanspruch* which Kant allowed to it. "Religion," so wrote Paul Natorp in his *Religion within the Limits of Humanity,* one of the most notable of the documents coming from this school, "or that which has hitherto concealed itself under the name of religion, is to be retained only, and strictly, in such measure as it confines itself within the limits of Humanity."[2] In America a similar doctrine has been widely disseminated during the last score of years by certain members of the new school of "the psychology of religion," and has found a footing even within the Christian Church. A well-known representative of it is Dr. E. S. Ames, who defines religion *tout simplement* as "the consciousness of the highest social values."[3] Of ultimate reality, it is claimed, we can know next to nothing, and in what we do know of it we can find nothing admirable or worthy of worship and devotion. What is worthy of worship and devotion is no real, but only an ideal, entity—our social values, a perfected human society. Yet we are justified in personifying this ideal and speaking of it as God.

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[1] As quoted and translated by E. Caird in his *Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte* (1885).

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[1] *Elementary Forms,* Eng. transl., p. 206.

[2] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Humanität,* 2 *Aufl.*, p. 49. Compare also Cohen's own brochure, *Religion und Sittlichkeit.*

[3] *Psychology of Religious Experience,* ch. VII.

> "It is not an accident that we think of great social entities as great personalities. Our college is our Virgin Mother, to whom we address songs and sentiments of genuine affection. Our city has a personality, photographed and visualised, whenever her honor or her ambition is challenged. Each state has an individuality and every nation is personified through a definite face and figure. Is it not just as natural to sum up the meaning of the whole of life in the person and image of God? Seemingly it is quite inevitable. It appears to be the most natural and the simplest way to represent to our minds and wills the moral values and the spiritual realities of life."[1]

So God is at least as real and as personal as Santa Claus!

Now we need have no hesitation in acknowledging the real measure of insight with which this Comtist theory is inspired. What Comte and all his followers have grasped with unusual firmness and clarity seems to be just the truth that we have ourselves been here at so much pains to elucidate—the organic and plenary reference of religious belief to our judgments of ethical value. And it is in the essential soundness of this initial contention that the secret of their influence is to be found. But if they are right in what they assert, they are assuredly wrong in what they deny. The attempt to confine the religious vision of God within the limits of our human society and to extrude from it all reference to a trans-human and trans-social Beyond comes into abrupt collision with a fact of the religious consciousness which is of equal authority and authenticity with the fact of its dependence upon our values. M. Durkheim, though succeeding excellently in demonstrating the point-for-point relationship between the religious cults of the primitives and their social organisations, has completely failed to make good his case that "the god of the clan, the totemic principle, can be nothing else than the clan itself." As regards its *content* no doubt it is the same—there is indeed nothing else for it to be. But as regards its

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[1] *The New Orthodoxy*, ch. II. Another American representative from whom one might quote is Professor Leuba.

reference it is very distinctly more; because it has *mana,* and in the very conception of *mana* the *Transzendenzanspruch* is enclosed. Even, however, if M. Durkheim had made it appear that in this earliest form of religion there was no trans-social reference, the state of the argument would not be seriously altered; for the really stubborn fact which opposes itself to Comte's theory is not the presence of such a reference in the cults of the Australian bushmen or the African pigmies but its presence in our own contemporary religious consciousness and in our own soul's need. The plain fact is that neither Comte's abstract Humanity nor Durkheim's more concrete social organism can be at all held capable of fulfilling the true functions of Godhead; they cannot give us the kind of help which the God of religion has always been believed to give, nor can they be held worthy of the kind of worship which has always been believed to be His due. As has been well and truly said, "In order to fulfil its social function, worship must be directed to a non-social object";[1] or, as another writer has put it, religion, if indeed it be a social attitude, is always "a social attitude towards the non-human environment."[2]

Nothing is more instructive in this connection than a study of Matthew Arnold's well-known discussion in *Literature and Dogma.* Arnold is clearly writing under the partial influence of Comte, and quotes more than once from Comte's leading disciple, Littré. He sets out by stressing in the strongest way the inherently ethical character of religion:

> "Surely, if there be anything with which metaphysics have nothing to do, and where a plain man, without skill to walk in the arduous paths of abstruse reasoning, may yet find himself at home, it is religion. For the object of religion is *conduct;* and conduct is really, however men may overlay it with philosophical disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world. That is to say, it is the simplest thing in the world as far as *understanding* is concerned; as regards *doing,* it is the hardest thing in the world."

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[1] By Professor W. E. Hocking in his article on "Illicit Naturalising of Religion" in *The Journal of Religion* for November, 1923. I know of no more telling demolition of the pretensions of the sociocratic theory of religion than is contained in that article and in another article by the same writer entitled "Is the Group Spirit Equivalent to God for All Practical Purposes?" in the issue for September, 1921, of the same journal. Another notable criticism is Professor C. C. J. Webb's book *Group Theories of Religion and the Individual* (1916). And reference may also be made to the article by Mr. Malinowski in *Science, Religion and Reality* (ed. Needham).

[2] Professor A. C. Watson, in his articles on "The Logic of Religion" in the *American Journal of Theology,* vol. XX, p. 95.

A little farther on we read:

> "Religion, however, means simply either a binding to righteousness or else a serious attending to righteousness and dwelling upon it. . . . And the antithesis between *ethical* and *religious* is thus quite a false one. Ethical means *practical*, it relates to practice or conduct passing into habit or disposition. Religious also means *practical*, but practical in a still higher degree; and the right antithesis to both ethical and religious is the same as the right antithesis to practical—namely, *theoretical*."

The difference between morality and religion seems thus to be reduced almost to vanishing-point, yet Arnold holds that it is certainly there, though only as "a difference of degree." What then is this difference of degree? Arnold's first answer is in the following well-remembered words:

> "Religion . . . is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling; the passage from morality to religion is made when to morality is applied emotion. And the true meaning of religion is thus not simply *morality* but *morality touched by emotion*."

We feel at once, however, that this does not help us; for morality touched by emotion is still only morality and, if quite untouched by emotion, it would be as little worthy of the name of morality as of the name of religion. And the copious illustrations of his distinction which Arnold next offers only serve to convince us that it is a distinction without a difference; as, for instance:

> " 'We all want to live honestly, but cannot,' says the Greek maxim-maker. That is morality. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' says St. Paul. That is religion."

In the next section, however, we begin to prick up our ears, for now the difference between morality and religion is made to depend on "the very great part in righteousness which belongs, we may say, to *not ourselves*," or, as he puts it in a later chapter, "that root and ground of all religion, that element of awe and gratitude which fills religion with emotion, and makes it other and greater than morality—the *not ourselves*."[1] Here Arnold appeals especially to the religion of the Hebrews:

> " . . . the *not ourselves* which weighed upon the mind of Israel, and engaged its awe, was the *not ourselves* by which we get the name for *righteousness*, and whence we find the help to *do right*. This conception was indubitably what lay at the bottom of that remarkable change which

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[1] This is in ch. VIII: the other quotations are all from ch. I.

under Moses, at a certain stage of their religious history, befell the Hebrew people's mode of naming God. . . . The name they used was: *The Eternal.*"

It is at this point that we are sensible of a certain equivocation in Arnold's position.[1] Comte too would have spoken of a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, but by this he would have meant only a power other than our *individual* selves, namely, Humanity as a whole. And we never feel quite sure that there is not an undertone of this kind in Arnold's words, as, for instance, when he tells us that "'Trust in *God*' is, in a deeply moved way of expression, the trust in the law of conduct; 'delight in *the Eternal*' is, in a deeply moved way of expression, the happiness we all feel to spring from conduct." Yet the second of these definitions, though hardly the first, is capable of a more generous meaning; and this meaning becomes perhaps as explicit as we could wish when Arnold proceeds to equate the belief that "there is an enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" with the fundamental confidence that "to righteousness belongs happiness." Here then we have all that Kant himself would desire, and (whether consciously or unconsciously) in Kant's very own words.

"An enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness"—the words, when allowed their full natural weight of meaning, indicate with excellent accuracy the fundamental respect in which religion really does transcend morality. They show us that the essential concern of religion is not simply with value but with *the relation of value to reality;* not simply with ideals but with the relation of our ideals to the actual scheme of things; not simply with human life but with the relation of human life to the ultimate background against which it is set. Thus if it is true on the one hand that the nature of reality is the concern of religion only in so far as it has bearing upon the status and stability of our ethical standards, it is no less true on the other hand that not until these standards have been referred to reality are we in possession of anything that is worthy to be called religion. Conscience provides us with our ideals but (when taken barely by itself) it leaves them suspended in the airy unsubstantiality of wish and desire, of unrealised futurity; while faith gives them a mooring in the real order of things.

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[1] "But the 'stream' and the 'tendency' having served their turn, like last week's placards, now fall into the background, and we learn at last that 'the Eternal' is not eternal at all, unless we give that name to whatever a generation sees happen—just as the habit of washing ourselves might be termed 'the Eternal not ourselves that makes for cleanliness,' or 'Early to bed and early to rise' the 'Eternal not ourselves that makes for longevity,' and so on—that 'the Eternal,' in short, is nothing in the world but a piece of literary clap-trap. The consequence is that all we are left with is the assertion that 'righteousness' is 'salvation' or welfare, and that there is a 'law' and a 'Power' which has something to do with this fact; and here again we must not be ashamed to say that we fail to understand what any one of these phrases means, and suspect ourselves once more to be on the scent of clap-trap."—F. H. Bradley in *Ethical Studies.*

Accordingly we are at last in a position to suggest a definition of religion which shall satisfy all the demands arising out of our criticisms of other definitions and conceptions of it; though, to be sure, any definition given at this stage must necessarily be expressed in somewhat formal and colourless terms. And it will be seen at once that there are two converse forms into which our definition can be thrown. We might say that what lies at the heart of religion is *a projection of our moral values into the real order of things;* and by so doing we would be doing justice to the deep elements of truth contained in the accounts of religion given by Feuerbach and Freud on the one hand and by the Comtists on the other. Or we might speak of religion as *an apprehension of reality through, and in terms of, our moral values;* and in phrasing it thus, we should be bringing into clear focus the real element of truth which we saw to lie behind the rationalists' assimilation of religion to speculative philosophy. Our present purpose will, however, be better served by a simpler phrase which will take in both the above meanings, though we must ask permission to include in it one word, the further elucidation of which we must postpone to the next chapter—the word 'trust.' Here then is our definition: *Religion is a moral trust in reality.*

It will be seen that in offering such a definition we are holding as closely as possible to the lead given us by the older writers whose views were set forth in the foregoing chapter. There was Kant himself, who found the essence of the religious problem to lie in the fact that it was "at once practical and theoretical, the practical forming a clue to the answer of the theoretical question"; and who accordingly defined religion as confidence in an ultimate "harmony between nature and morality" or "trust in the promise of the moral law." There was Lotze, to whom religion was an "attempt to blend the Existent and the Worthy."

There was Ritschl, who defined it as "a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality. . . ." And there was Herrmann, who declared it to be "concerned with the attempt to regard the multiplicity of the world as an ordered whole of means by which the immediately felt highest value of the pious man is realised."[1]

This view of religion as having to do essentially with the relation of value to reality and as centring itself in the trustful assurance that our values are securely grounded in the real nature of things, is one which of recent years has seemed more and more to engage the assent of thinkers and investigators and indeed to bring to rest in itself inquiries starting from many different schools of thought. We find, for example, Martineau, the Unitarian theist, telling us that "the very gate of entrance to religion, the very moment of its new birth, is the discovery that your ideal is the everlasting Real, no transient brush of a fancied angel's wing but the abiding presence and persuasion of the Soul of souls."[2] We find Professor Höffding, the Danish 'radical empiricist,' declaring that "the religious problem proper only begins where Comte's religion ends, *viz.*, at the question as to how the development of the world is related to that of the human race and to that of the human ideal,"[3] or again (and most instructively) that "the relation between value and reality is the sphere in which religion finds its home, in distinction from other experiences which are concerned only with values or only with reality."[4] We find F. H. Bradley, the Hegelian idealist, informing us that "on examining what we find in the religious consciousness, we discover that it is the ideal self considered as realised and real. The ideal self, which in morality is to be, is here the real ideal which truly is."[5] And lastly we find Dean Inge, the Platonist, defining faith as a "confidence in the reality of things hoped for and the hopefulness of things real," and declaring that "the ultimate identity of existence and value is the venture of faith to which mysticism and speculative idealism"—and surely then (as we ourselves would prefer to have it) something deeper and more elemental than either, namely, religion—"are committed."[1]

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[1] References in the foregoing chapter.

[2] *A Study of Religion*, 2d ed., vol. I, p. 12.

[3] *History of Modern Philosophy*, Eng. transl., vol. II, p. 359.

[4] *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 243.

[5] *Ethical Studies*, p. 284. Lest any should think that this represents an early doctrine of Bradley's, afterwards departed from, it may be pointed out that it is exactly repeated in his latest work, *Essays on Truth and Reality*. "From the point of view of mere duty, and so far as merely that aspect is concerned, I find no difference at all between religion and morality. . . . But . . . in morality proper the ideal is, so far,

At so crucial a point in his reflections the solitary thinker is glad to have a cloud of witnesses very close about him.

But Does Primitive Religion Concern Itself with Ultimate Reality?

V

Before carrying our analysis further, it will be necessary to say something in answer to certain possible objections, for it may be that as many voices will now be raised against the inclusion in our definition of a reference to *ultimate reality* as were previously raised against the inclusion in it of a reference to moral standards.

And first there will be the objection drawn from the facts of primitive religion. Just as we had previously to meet the declaration that, however closely the highest forms of religion may be linked with moral values, primitive religion seems to have nothing to do with them at all, so now we must meet the parallel declaration that primitive religion cannot be believed to concern itself with the ultimate nature of things, however certainly an advanced monotheism may afterwards be found to do so.

It may be said at once that this objection is more deserving of our sympathy than the previous one, the reference of primitive religion to ultimate reality being by no means so easy to discover as its reference to ethical standards. Nevertheless the solution of the difficulty lies in making a distinction almost exactly parallel to that which we found it necessary to make in the other case. We must of course grant unreservedly that the savage is not in possession of the conception of ultimate reality, as we understand that phrase. The Eternal, the Infinite, and the Absolute, in our senses of them, are all beyond his ken, because he is not yet able to conceive of eternity or of infinity or of the distinction between the conditioned and the unconditioned. Yet we should claim that he *is* in possession of a conception which,

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not viewed as existing. . . . The moral idea is a 'to be' which is 'not yet.' But in religion the ideal good must be taken as real though, on the other side, as also in part not realised. Where for us there is only an idea, I do not see how it is possible to have religion." (P. 441.)

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, 1st series, pp. 170, 271.

[illegible] as we have already imposed upon these
the primitive [illegible].

however far removed from these others in a theoretical point of view, is *practically* equivalent to them—in the sense that it fills the same place in his outlook on life that these fill in ours. For the savage cannot but be aware of the larger background against which his life is set and by which his fate is for the most part determined. He cannot help regarding himself as a fragment in a larger scheme of things. Quite evidently there is, without him and above him, a great *fund of power* in the hands of which he is as potter's clay. And it does seem true to say that from its earliest beginnings religion appears as a confident belief that this power is not indifferent, or can at least be made not to remain indifferent, to our human welfare. No race known to history has been entirely without faith in a possible interest, on the part of some superhuman agency, in our mortal weal and woe. There the modern Christian theist joins hands with the rudest of his ancestors. Where he differs is only in the way in which that agency is conceived by him. The power whose aid religion invokes is apparently first conceived as a "totemic principle"—the *mana* of the Melanesians, the *orenda* of the Iroquois Indians—*i. e.*, as a mysterious impersonal force which pervades things, and which may be enlisted in man's favour. A little later it is believed to consist of a number of "spirits" who can, by suitable propitiation, be persuaded to help the worshipper. It is probably a long time before this power comes to be definitely conceived of as the All-powerful, still less as the source and Maker of all things that are. And even then it is a long step from the great God Altjira[1] of the Central Australian Arunta, or even from the Yahweh of Mosaic Israel, to the "Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable" of the Westminster *Shorter Catechism*—not to say the "Absolute Spirit" of Hegelian theology. Yet each and all of these conceptions, however far they may seem to fall short of the Absolute as we should conceive it, and especially of what we might call the 'mathematical Absolute,' represent what is for those who entertain them a true *practical absolute*. The Australian savage, no less than ourselves, strives in his religion to make connection, in the interest of the things he values most highly, with what is *for him,* and in a practical view-point, the most real and the most ultimate of environing powers. "I feel convinced," says Professor Clement Webb, "that when once a stage of intellectual development has been reached at which the question of the relation of God to the Absolute would arise, no conception of God which takes Him for less than the ultimate Reality will satisfy the demands of the religious consciousness. And this is so because it is, I think, in principle true from the first that what men have sought in religion is always communication with that which is supposed to possess within itself the secret of our life and of our surroundings, and therefore to exert over us and them a mysterious power which we shall do well to enlist upon our side."[1] And with this view we may safely agree.

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[1] See Durkheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 285 ff. (summarising Strehlow); or J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 114 ff.

And need our Religion do so?

VI

There are, however, certain other quarters from which objection may be taken to the view that religion is concerned essentially with ultimate reality. It was, for example, suggested half a century ago by Sir J. R. Seeley that "it is not exclusively, but only *par excellence*, that religion is directed towards God," and that the name of religion belongs by right to any "habitual and permanent admiration" or to any "influence which draws men's thoughts away from their personal interests, making them intensely aware of other existences."[2] The same view was championed at a later date by F. H. Bradley, who contended in his *Appearance and Reality* that religion is not an attitude towards a certain kind of object, but a certain kind of attitude towards any object. It is, in his own words, "a fixed feeling of fear, resignation, admiration, or approval, no matter what may be the object, provided that this feeling reaches a certain strength and is qualified by a certain degree of reflection." "It is a common phrase in life," he goes on, "that one may make a deity of this or that person, object or pursuit; and in such a case our attitude, it seems to me, must be called religious. This is the case often, for example, in sexual and parental love."[3] Bradley (as we have

[1] *God and Personality*, pp. 137–138.

[2] *Natural Religion* (edition of 1882), pp. 73, 236.

[3] Second edition, pp. 438–440 (footnote). Most Bradleians have followed the master in taking this view of religion. See, for instance, Professor A. E. Taylor's early volume, *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 430: "Within certain limits the centre of religious emotion may be almost anything in which we feel a strong and

already seen) would accept our view of religion as being concerned not merely with the ideal but also with the real; and he is likewise willing to allow with Seeley that "in its highest sense"[1] or *par excellence* religion is concerned with that which is ultimately real; but he believes that the name of religion may legitimately be given to certain forms of devotion to lesser realities.

Our only criticism of this view would be a terminological one. So far as the purpose of its defenders is to call attention to certain far-going emotional resemblances between the religious man's attitude to his God and the patriot's attitude to his country or the lover's attitude to his lady, we have no quarrel to pick with them; for religious awe can hardly be a thing so entirely *sui generis* as Rudolf Otto claims. Our point would rather be that the universal impulse to regard *the ultimate source of power* with such a sentiment is a well-defined phenomenon by itself and one commonly distinguished from the phenomena of patriotism and romantic love (which are not unlike it in regard to the purely subjective emotions concerned in them); and that it is as convenient as it is habitual to reserve for this phenomenon the special name of religion. After all, it is only by a conscious use of metaphor that the poet calls Althea divine or Phyllis a goddess; as it is only in a figure which, like all figures, is not intended to be pressed too far, that the Apostle speaks of men "whose god is their belly." Yet we need not quarrel about words, so long as only we make it clear that the phenomenon with which we are in these pages concerning ourselves is not patriotism or love or friendship, but something which, under the name of religion, is commonly distinguished from these as being directed towards a different *object*.

Worthy of closer consideration is the position occupied by Mr. Bertrand Russell. This incisive writer readily grants that the view of life "which we have been accustomed to regard as specially religious" is the view that "in some hidden manner the world of fact is really harmonious with the world of ideals";[2] and to that extent he is therefore in full agreement with the position which has here been defended—and we are glad to have his

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absorbing interest, and which we recognise as higher and greater than ourselves—a friend, a woman, a country, etc., etc." *Cf.* also Bernard Bosanquet in his *What Religion Is*, p. 5, and elsewhere.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 440 n.

[2] *Philosophical Essays* (1910), p. 62.

support. But he denies that this view really constitutes the essence of religion, and contends that, on the contrary, the highest of all forms of religion is that which gets along without it. There is no attribution of our ideals to the real world in the true religion; which rather consists of two distinct parts—a clinging to, and worship of, our ideals conceived merely as ideal, and an "impartial" worship of the real order, considered merely as the actually existent, and frankly recognised to be indifferent to distinctions of good and evil. "The two worships subsist side by side without any dogma: the one involving the goodness but not the existence of its object, the other involving the existence but not the goodness of its object."[1] Thus although religion is still conceived as deriving its power "from the sense of union with the world which it is able to give," the utter collapse of traditional dogma has taught us that such union can be guaranteed to us only by the way of complete renunciation. We must ask nothing of the universe but must accept it as it is and try to love it and worship it as it is, however fundamentally rotten it may reveal itself to be.[2]

It will thus be seen that while Mr. Russell shares with a writer like Seeley the desire to make religion independent of any belief as to the nature of the real order, he attains this end in a significantly different way. Seeley attained it by denying that religion has any necessary connection with the real order at all. Mr. Russell attains it by allowing the necessity of a connection with the real order but claiming that this can be realised in complete independence of any belief as to the character of that order.

What are we to say to this? We need not waste our time in arguing that the religion known to history cannot be made to fit into this mould without a complete transformation of its very substance, for that Mr. Russell would not be at great pains to deny. The only question we can relevantly raise is whether anything worthy of being called religion can continue to exist when this has taken place. Can we really worship that which is not, in respect of any kind of excellence, worthy to be worshipped? Can we worship mere brute fact, taken as such? Can we love that which is neither good nor lovely, merely because it exists and has power over us? Nay rather, *ought* we to love and to worship such objects as these? And are we doing anything less than selling our birthright, as children of the light and of the knowledge of good and evil, if we do? Surely there is but one answer, and it cannot be better phrased than in the words of Mr. Russell's earliest critic, who wrote that "there remains, therefore, as the only valid form of worship the worship of the ideal conceived as the eternally real, or (to put the same thing from the other side) the worship of the real conceived as good."[1]

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[1] "The Essence of Religion" in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XI, no. 1 (Oct., 1912).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

What Characters do we Attribute to Reality when We put Moral Trust in ?

VII

Having faced these objections, let us now carry our analysis a step further. We defined religion as a moral trust in reality. Discussion of the psychological nature and logical grounds of this trust will occupy us in our next chapter, but meanwhile this other question may be raised: What exactly do we affirm of reality, and what characters do we predicate of it, when we put moral trust in it?

It has sometimes been suggested that the only postulate which religious trust need make of the universe is that it must be such that goodness shall be possible within it. This phrase may doubtless be understood in so large a way as to bring it very near the truth, but the meaning it immediately suggests is one that falls short of what here seems necessary. For there is a sense in which goodness is *always* possible no matter what the environment may be like. You can have a "good will"—if that is all you want—in any kind of world. But if room is to be made for religion, goodness must be more than merely possible in the world—it must be intrinsic to it, of one piece with it, at home within it. If the spirit of worship is to have any place at all, then conscience must be no mere sojourner and resident alien in the universe, existing only on sufferance, but must rather be its own native burgess, exercising all the functions and enjoying all the privileges of citizenship. X

The central affirmation of faith may accordingly be expressed by saying that the inner core of reality must be *continuous with* the moral consciousness. Such an affirmation lies implicit in any proper sense of union between man and the reality from which he springs and to which he belongs; but it is just such a sense of union—of oneness, of communion and, after estrangement, of reconciliation—that we have in mind when we speak of religion; and the perfect achievement of this union is what we mean by Eternal Life. I may have my ideals, and be faithful enough to them, but, as a clever writer has put it, "ideals make lonely dwelling-places."[1] What religion does is to deliver me from this loneliness by giving my ideals a mooring, and as it were an enfranchisement, in the 'scheme of things entire.' It gives me the assurance that in following the gleam of righteousness and love and honour I am entering no unsubstantial region of my own fancying, but am rather identifying myself with the inmost nature of things, and bringing my finite will into line with the Infinite Will that made and moves the stars. And thereby is opened out to me a wholly new outlook upon life. I am now at home in the universe. I am no longer a slave but a son. I am not fighting alone, against impossible odds, for a fantastically hopeless cause, and with the paralysing suspicion in my heart that it cannot really matter whether I win or lose, because in the end it can make no difference to anything. Nay, rather it is Reality's own battle that I am fighting, and the stars in their courses are fighting with me and the very Force that moves them is on my side; for that Force (as long ago said *il mæstro di color che sanno*) is nothing else than Love, the very Love whose feeblest earthly counterpart burns in my own heart and moves my hands to fight. And it is the only battle that matters in all the world, and the prize is the only prize that will endure. And at the very heart of the surrounding system, behind nature, behind fate, behind brute fact, there is great care and interest whether I succeed or fail. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Or, as a poet translates it:

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[1] Professor Pringle-Pattison in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1913—a year after the publication of Russell's essay in the same journal.

> "Earth cannot show so brave a sight
> As when a single soul does fence
> The batteries of alluring sense,
> And Heaven views it with delight."[2]

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[1] Leonard Merrick in a story called "Dead Violets" in *The Man Who Understood Women*.

[2] Andrew Marvell.

It is, however, to be noted very carefully that the oneness with reality with which we are concerned in religion is essentially an ethical oneness. That is to say, it is a continuity and identity not of substance but of purpose or end. On the one hand it may be said with truth that the substantive continuity of man with the universe is given quite apart from religion; for we do not need to be religious in order to know that we are physically and causally continuous with the larger universe from which we sprang. And on the other hand it must be said that religion has in itself no concern with this substantive constitution of things. It knows nothing (as Kant so clearly saw) of *thinghood,* or origin or efficient causation or the inherence of parts and whole. It leaves all that to the perceptions of sense and the heightened perceptiveness of natural science. For itself it has only one category to work with, and it is a category of a very different order—the category of purpose. The only affirmation it makes is that the highest ends which our conscience sets before itself are not foreign to the world's own final end, but are on the contrary our surest available clues to the nature of that end. The only knowledge it offers me is the knowledge that my will is then likest to the World-will when it is directed towards that which is good—a meagre enough measure perhaps, when regarded merely as knowledge, yet enabling me to envisage the whole universe (as Kant said) as a *Reich der Zwecke,* a Realm of Ends, or (in the richer language of Christianity) as the Kingdom of One Whose reign is a reign of love.

It will be noticed that we have spoken more than once of our highest values as being our surest *available* clues to the nature of the ultimate reality. The implied limitation is an important one; for we must not allow ourselves to forget that even the loftiest divinings of our human spirits may still fall far short of the fulness of the Divine Reality. To this fact religion has always had its eyes wide open; it has been more than ready to recognise that, in spite of every revelation of His mind and will that God makes to us, yet are His judgments unsearchable and His ways past finding out.[1] Indeed there is even a sense in which we may be said to have positive insight into the partial and limited character of our human values, and to know not only that they may but also that they must be but the imperfect shadows of a reality that far transcends them. Love and courage and purity, unselfishness and the service of others—these all plainly bear the marks of coming to us from Infinite Being, yet it is plain that they cannot be attributed to Infinite Being without passing into something entirely beyond our finite power to conceive. What can courage mean for omnipotence? Or unselfishness for absolute selfhood? Or love for that which is complete in itself? The morass of apparent contradictions into which we are led by the attempt to conceive of the moral virtues as directly predicable of Absolute Being has been a favourite theme of such thinkers as Spinoza and Hegel and F. H. Bradley.[1] But where these thinkers have seriously erred is in supposing themselves able to achieve a positive conception of the Infinite Being which goes beyond these contradictions, and beyond all the intimations of our moral nature. What inevitably happens, of course, is that in trying to transcend morality they fall below it and present us with an Absolute conceived, if not in entirely unspiritual terms, at least in terms of lower potencies of our spirits than moral personality and the knowledge of good and evil. The nemesis of trying to think beyond the best that experience has revealed to us is that unwittingly we fall back on something that is less good. We cannot, therefore, agree with the above-mentioned thinkers that in religion we are ever carried 'beyond good and evil,' or beyond the leadings of our highest values. That religion goes utterly beyond morality as regards its *reference* we have already sufficiently insisted; but we cannot believe that it can ever safely go beyond it as regards its value-content. Absolutist writers have sometimes argued that at least the conception of 'the forgiveness of sins' carries us beyond anything that is intelligible to the moral conscience. But the fact surely is that the necessity of forgiving one another's sins represents one of our highest human moral insights. And it is precisely because we know it to be our duty to forgive sins committed against ourselves that we attribute to God a willingness to forgive the sins we commit against Him. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Thus while the Divine Reality must immeasurably transcend our highest glimpses of ideal goodness, yet it is from

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[1] Romans 11 : 33.

[1] See especially the chapter on "Goodness" in *Appearance and Reality*.

these glimpses that our truest knowledge of that Reality is won. Moreover such knowledge, however far it may fall short of the fulness of its infinite object, is yet, so far as its positive leading is concerned, entirely true and reliable, giving us an authentic shaft of vision into the very heart of the eternal mystery. It is a knowledge also that is sufficient for every practical need of our spirits, providing us with light enough to do the duties of our stations and have joy in the doing of them. "In this way, after all reason's overambitious attempts to soar above the limits of our experience have been proved to be vain, there is still enough left over to satisfy us in a practical point of view."[1]

the nature of our interest in making this attribution

VIII

But now there is a further question that may be pressed. How, precisely, are we to define the nature of the concern which man has in the continuity of reality with his own consciousness of value? To what human interest does religion minister? What is to be gained from communion with God?

One very well-known and widely influential answer is that of Professor Höffding, who tells us in his *Philosophy of Religion* that the essential concern of religion is with "the fate of values in the struggle for existence" or, in other words, with "the conservation of value."[2] More fully:

> "The essence of all religion consists, not in the solution of riddles but in the conviction that value will be preserved."[3]
>
> "It will thus be seen that in its innermost essence religion is concerned not with the comprehension but with the valuation of existence, and that religious ideas express the relation in which actual existence, as we know it, stands to that which, for us, invests life with its highest value. For the core of religion . . . consists in the conviction that no value perishes out of the world."[4]

Moreover it is, as Professor Höffding rightly sees, religion alone which can give us this conviction; for, "if we could and ought to uphold no other views of existence than those which scientific inquiry can construct, the axiom of the conservation of value falls to the ground."[5] Echoes of this formulation of Höffding's may be found far and wide in current theological literature. It has been followed, for instance, by Professor W. E. Hocking, who tells us that "the religious quest is a rebellion against the depotency of values; it can be satisfied and remain satisfied only if the universe is, in truth, a well of value without limit."[1]

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[1] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Kanon*, 3.

[2] *Op. cit.*, Eng. transl., pp. 107, 374.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

Yet this way of stating the matter, however helpful and illuminating, is a little too narrow, and also a little too negative, to do justice to the highest insights of religion. Certainly what religion does is to provide us with a deep grounding and support for our values, but the confidence it gives us seems to be in something more than their *conservation*—if that is to mean merely their continuance or their survival in the struggle for existence. It is that assuredly, but it is something more. For, supposing it possible that natural science itself should some day become capable of assuring us that "no value perishes out of the world," we should still remain in need of much of the deep peace which religion gives; for we might still have something of the feeling that we, and our values with us, however secure from ultimate destruction, were nevertheless aliens in a strange and fundamentally hostile world. There can be no doubt, however, that religion delivers man not only from transiency but from isolation too. The citizenship of the *civitas Dei,* like lesser citizenships, gives us more than mere security, precious as that is; it gives to our lives a new depth of meaning by enabling us to envisage them in a wider system of relations; and, at its best, it gives us a new Companionship and a new and purely blessed sense of being at home in a Father's house. We must thus beware of stating the benefits of religion too narrowly; but we must also beware of stating them too negatively. To characterise religion, with Professor Hocking, as "a rebellion against the depotency" of values is to give the impression that it is always, as it were, on the defensive—a little anxious and a little defiant. That this sense of protest is, in certain circumstances, native to religion, we have already had occasion to note, but we have likewise seen that in less stressful situations its place is taken by a sense of something more like unwavering confidence.[1] Especially in an age of *Sturm und Drang* like our own we have to be on our guard against ways of regarding religion that do less than justice to the serenity of its normal outlook.

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[1] This sentence is from the paper quoted above on "Illicit Naturalising of Religion." The following noteworthy passage may here be added from the same writer's book, *Human Nature and Its Remaking,* pp. 412–413: "Values, human values, can survive only if, reaching out toward a metaphysical condition which their dream-shapes foreshadow, they *find it.* They need reality to climb on; they need a reality they can climb on. They want an independent source of standards, a mooring outside of nature, such as we surmised at the beginning of our study. Their own *poussée vitale* droops, half-grown, unless it meets an equivalent *attrait vital,* streaming into its environment from some pole outside itself. . . . And thus this experiment, this world-surgery, begins to make so much unmistakable: That what human nature has been responding to is not its own instinctive self-esteem, codified in institutions, or uncodified, but a valuation believed real and objective, supposedly hailing from beyond nature, authoritatively requiring of man that self-honour and that honour of his kind which his own impulse achieves but fitfully and from the centre outward."

Historical religion has commonly summed up its sense of the gain that accrues to man from being religious in the conception of *salvation.* What faith does for us, it has told us, is to save us, to deliver us. And if we ask what it is that it delivers us from, we shall find that the world's answer is precisely the one we have given. That from which we are saved by faith is spiritual homelessness and isolation.[2] By establishing an ethical continuity between our feeble selves and the ultimate source (or sources) of power in our environment, religion transforms the universe, which would otherwise be a bleak and angry wilderness, into a *Home* for our souls.

There is, however, one aspect of the salvation wrought by faith that demands special mention—salvation from sin. We must, indeed, carefully avoid the mistake of regarding this as the whole meaning of salvation; for that would be to make the practice of religion a mere means to a moral end, instead of granting it an intrinsic value of its own as providing us with a kind of satisfaction which the life of duty, taken by itself, could never have brought us. Faith is precious to us, in the first instance, because it rescues us from a life of mere slavelike moral obedience to laws whose provenance we do not understand, and makes us free citizens of God's universe—"no longer slaves but sons."[3] But just because we do stand on this higher level, the fulfilling of the moral law is for the first time really brought within our power. Looked at from the vantage-ground of faith in God, sin, which was formerly felt to be merely forbidden, is now seen to be not even attractive. So that what the most strenuous efforts at obedience had failed to do before, very heart's desire succeeds in doing now. "When we were unspiritual, the sinful cravings excited by the Law were active in our members and made us fruitful to death; but now we are done with the Law, we have died to what once held us, so that we can serve in a new way, not under the written code as of old but in the Spirit."[1]

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[1] The reference is to pp. 152–158 *supra.*

[2] "And now we see from what we are saved and how. We are saved, if we must have a word, from isolation; we are saved by giving ourselves to something which we cannot help holding supreme."—Bernard Bosanquet, *What Religion Is,* p. 6.

[3] Gal. 4 : 7.

The relation of religious faith to our moral experience is thus seen to be in some sort a double one. First faith emerges out of the moral consciousness and then, having emerged, it quickens that consciousness. First it is born of moral desire and then, being born, it reveals itself as the only means whereby that desire may be fulfilled. And so to the end; each new brick solidly built into our characters giving to faith a surer foundation, and this securer faith in its turn giving us power to build in another brick.

IX

Irreligion.

It may help to give point to our definition of religion if now, in conclusion, we attempt to characterise the purely non-religious outlook on life. Such an outlook is of course far from being native to the human race, and indeed, so far as we know, there has never been any human society in which it has become normal or general. Consequently its stability—its ability to maintain itself as a self-consistent and self-sufficient attitude of soul—has never been historically demonstrated. Nevertheless at certain points in the history of the West there has appeared *among individuals* the tendency to assume an outlook on life which should dispense altogether with the satisfactions and supports of religious faith.

The determining factor in this outlook may be said to be the denial that in respect of his values man is in any way integral to the environing universe, when taken as a whole. In respect of his bodily existence in space he is indeed held to be integral to it, but in respect of his ideals, his standards of conduct, and his spiritual aspirations, he is regarded as being merely a resident alien within it. Physically he is one with that from which he sprang, but spiritually he is homeless. His ideals are purely his own—that is to say, they are purely human preferences, having no ground whatever in the nature of the system of things to which he belongs. The fund of power without him is sheerly indifferent to them, being in its very nature devoid of moral susceptibility or appreciation. It follows that it can make no difference at all to the final sum of things whether my conduct be good or evil; for, reality being what it is, there is no means by which the difference which *I* know to exist between good and evil could be registered by it. And so, in this view of irreligion, the measure of the security and conservation of my values is only the measure of my own power, or of that of my human associates and successors, to conserve them. The nature of things offers me no guaranty or promise of any kind that even those acts and efforts of will which I feel to be most unmistakably demanded of me will in the end count for anything. In the end it may be (or rather, certainly will be) so much effort *wasted*. For the end can be nothing else than the complete extinction of the last echoes of the achievements of the human soul. The body, indeed, is immortal. Its elements can never die. Of matter and energy, we are told, there is conservation. But of spirit and of value there is none. Not of the material but of the spiritual universe is it true that at the last it will be gathered up into nothingness:

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[1] Romans 7:5–6. Moffatt's translation. Cf. Bernard Bosanquet in *Essays and Addresses*, p. 124: "The truth is that nothing gives such force in getting rid of evil as this belief that the good is the only reality."

> "This smoke of thought blow clean away,
> And leave with ancient night alone
> The steadfast and enduring bone."[1]

So far as history can at all inform us, a view of this kind was for the first time contemplated by the Eleatic scientists in the Greece of the fifth century B. C.; and we know from Plato that in the decades before his death in 347 it had become widely influential among the youth of Athens, being there disseminated by popular teachers who combined the atomistic cosmology of Leucippus with the moral scepticism of the Sophists: Among these latter teachers it took the form of the dogma that there was no *purpose* operative anywhere in the universe outside the works of man. All is the result of "chance" and "necessity"—that is to say, quite fortuitous and meaningless from the point of view of reason, but rigidly determined by the fixed habits of atoms. The laws of morality thus bear no relation at all to the nature of things, but are purely conventional and artificial; they are, as the phrase then went, not of nature (*physis*) but of art (*technē*). Here is Plato's contemporary account of this earliest form of irreligion:

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[1] A. E. Housman, "The Immortal Part" in *A Shropshire Lad*.

> "They say that the greatest and fairest of things are the work of nature and chance, and the lesser the work of art which receives from nature all the great and primeval things just as they are, and fashions and frames all the lesser things which are therefore commonly termed artificial. . . . I can make the matter clearer still. They say that fire and water and earth and air are all of nature and of chance, and not of art; and that as to the bodies that come next in order—the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars—they come into being through the agency of these entirely inanimate elements; and that they are carried round by the chance action of some force of affinity between hot and cold, dry and moist, soft and hard, and whatever other opposites have been commingled in a mixture which is 'by chance' and 'of necessity';[1] and that in this way the whole universe has been generated, and all that is in the universe—all animals and plants; and that all the astronomical periods are determined in this way, not by the agency of Mind or of any God, nor by art, but only, as I have said, by nature and by chance. They say that art came into being out of these things at a later date, that it is a human thing and of human origin, and that its productions are only make-believes without much resemblance to the truth—just a series of related images such as are created by painting and music and their sister arts. They allow, however, that those arts which produce practical results, such as medicine, agriculture, and gymnastics, owe a certain share of their power to nature, but they claim that politics does so only in a small measure, being mostly a matter of art. Legislation (*nomothesia*) they hold to have nothing to do with nature but only with art, so that its pronouncements (*theseis*) cannot be spoken of as true. . . .[2]
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> "To begin with, they say that the gods exist by art—not, that is, by nature but by certain laws which differ in different places according to the convention of those who make them. They even assert that one thing is good by nature and another thing by law; and that *from the point of view of nature there is absolutely no such thing as justice*, which is constantly subject to dispute and to change—to changes, that is, which have authority only for the time at which they are made, since they are the products not of anything in the nature of things but of art and the laws.
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> "All this, my friends, from learned men, poets and prose-writers, to our

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[1] κατὰ τύχην ἐξ ἀνάγκης.

[2] What he calls Legislation would include what we now call Ethics, which was then studied as a part of Politics.

youth! They assert that the highest right is nothing but might! All this makes our youth fall into impieties, for they doubt whether the gods are such as the law bids them believe; and factions are formed among those who urge them to lead 'a right life according to nature,' *i. e.*, in plain language, to lord it over other people instead of serving them according to law."[1]

Perhaps never again was the purely naturalistic and non-religious view of things to be defended with such a thoroughgoing consistency, and such a penetrating insight into its full consequences. But, after a long period of oblivion throughout the Early and Middle Christian ages, when it was remembered only in its detested Epicurean echoes, it has been destined since the Renaissance to enter the arena of debate a second time. Its dress, certainly, has been somewhat changed. We no longer hear of fire, air, earth, and water. As the poet Donne explains:

> "The new philosophy calls all in doubt,
> The element of fire is quite put out;
> The sun is lost and the earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.
> . . . .
> And now they think of new ingredients."

But its essential outlines remain the same, except that, as has been indicated, they have been less rigorously carried to their true logical consequences. It may here suffice to refer the reader to two very remarkable statements of this modern naturalism, each of which has been written in our own time and has attracted wide notice—Huxley's celebrated Romanes Lecture for 1893 entitled *Ethics and Evolution*, and Mr. Bertrand Russell's hardly less well-known essay on *A Free Man's Worship*, first published in 1903.[2]

Huxley's statement, despite its apparent derivation from Darwinian doctrine, is up to a certain point remarkably like what a Sophistic teacher might have written in Plato's day. He centres his argument in the old Sophistic distinction between Nature and Art. He begins with a description of the "State of Nature," which is conceived, in essentially Greek manner, as an ever-changing cycle of growth and decay. Just as a bean, sinking into

[1] Plato, *Laws*, 889–890.

[2] In the *Independent Review;* afterwards reprinted in the author's *Philosophical Essays* and in his *Mysticism and Logic*.

the ground, brings forth a bean-plant which waxes and blooms, and then fades away into nothingness, leaving behind it only a few beans like the original one, so is it with the Cosmos as a whole and all that it contains. Such is the context in which the brief struggle for existence and the brief survival of the fittest takes place. Such is the "State of Nature." But in that upward development of our planet through which it is at present passing, there has happened to be produced a particularly powerful animal species called Man, which has formed itself into a number of societies and has produced what have been called civilisations. The process of setting up a civilisation is analogous to that of reclaiming a piece of land from its natural state and forming an artificial garden. Thus it is that out of the "State of Nature" man produces a "State of Art." But only for a little while.

> "That which lies before the human race is a constant struggle to maintain and improve, in opposition to the State of Nature, the State of Art of an organised polity; in which, and by which, man may develop a worthy civilisation, capable of maintaining and constantly improving itself, until the evolution of our globe shall have entered so far upon its downward course that the cosmic process resumes its sway; and once more the State of Nature prevails over the surface of our planet."

Within the "State of Art," however, there has arisen the conception not only of social justice but of inward righteousness. If we ask whence it arose, we are told only that "civilisation could not advance far without the establishment of a capital distinction between the case of involuntary and that of voluntary misdeed." At all events, there was somehow or other set up in man's heart a standard of good and evil. And it was inevitable that before long the "State of Nature" itself should come to be measured up against this standard—and found wanting.

> "The ancient sage . . . found it as hard as we do to bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good. . . . Thus, brought before the tribunal of ethics, the cosmos might well seem to stand condemned. The conscience of man revolted against the moral indifference of nature, and the microcosmic atom should have found the illimitable macrocosm guilty. But few or none ventured to record the verdict."

They did not venture, because they were afraid. And so arose the various religions, which are but so many attempts to escape

The objectivity of good and evil—that is where swords must be crossed in defence of religion. What is the genuine witness of the moral consciousness in this whole matter? Some answer to this question will be attempted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF

The fundamental Certitude of Duty + Value

I

We have now advanced in our analysis of faith so far as to know this about it: that it is a moral trust in the ultimate Source of power, a confident reference of our values to the real order of things. That, however, is not only a very general but also a very external description of it, as is indeed witnessed to by the fact that we have been able to win assent for it as easily among the foes of religion as among its friends. What we must now do, therefore, is to inquire into the inner nature of this trust and confidence as it reveals itself in the experience of those who possess it. Whence, we must ask, comes this conviction that reality is on the side of goodness? On what grounds does it rest? And can these grounds be exhibited as a logical process? It is to the answering of these questions that the present chapter must be devoted.

What we have to do, then, is to trace, in as exact and careful a way as we can, the process by which faith in God comes to birth in the soul of man. And the first point to be firmly established is that the process *begins* from the awareness of our human values, that is to say, from the moral consciousness as such. In the order of evidence, moral knowledge is anterior to religious knowledge. The certainty of conscience is a certainty which is logically prior to the certainty of faith. "Values," says Höffding, "must be discovered and produced in the world of experience before they can be conceived or assumed to exist in a higher world. The other world must always be derived from this world; it can never be a primary concept. It changes with the changes of this world. . . . Discussion is always led back by implacable logic to the conceptual priority of ethics over religion."[1] And the point has again and again been insisted upon by later writers, this so terrible and yet so obvious truth. For ourselves there is no escaping it. Not only must we recognise that "there is no sanction for morality in the ways of the cosmos" and that the system of things to which we belong is *indifferent* to our goodness or badness, but we must even recognise an *enmity* between the world and our values. "Ethical nature, while born of cosmic nature, is necessarily at enmity with its parent." The last word of human wisdom must thus be to stiffen our muscles and do what we can, with stout hearts, to put off the dread day of final doom when at last the "State of Nature" will have completed its final re-encroachment into the artificial garden of man's moral achievement and all will be darkness once more.

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[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 330.

Mr. Russell's essay, though the movingly beautiful manner of its expression has made it a minor classic by itself, agrees so exactly in its teaching with Huxley's lecture, that it would be superfluous to give a separate account of it here. But the quotation of a few striking sentences may serve to round off our delineation of the non-religious outlook as a whole:

> "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."
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> "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day."

Such then are the outlines of irreligion. Huxley would willingly agree that we are right in applying to his view this epithet, and Mr. Russell would make only this demur—that, while his view is certainly the precise negation of what "we have been accustomed to regard as specifically religious," it is nevertheless possible to maintain within its unaccustomed framework an attitude of worship of another and somewhat novel sort. With this demurrer we have already dealt,[1] and have therefore now little hesitation in concluding that the essence of the non-religious outlook lies in its refusal to give our human standards of good and evil any integral part and place in the real nature of things.

It follows that the only ground on which the battle between religion and irreligion can be fought out to an effective issue is that of the interpretation of the deeper implications of our moral experience. *Did the materialistic Sophists of whom Plato tells us, did Huxley, does Mr. Russell, adequately allow for the consciousness of moral obligation and all that it contains?* The Sophists taught that goodness "exists only by law"—that is to say, is only a human convention. Is that true to our experience of its claim? As for Huxley, there can be little doubt that the brief paragraph in which he attempts to show how man's moral consciousness could have grown up in a universe which showed itself to be utterly non-moral is the one weakest spot in his brilliant essay. "Wolves could not hunt in packs except for the real, though unexpressed, understanding that they should not attack one another during the chase"; and that, according to him, is the origin of moral obligation. But surely we know too much about moral obligation for any such *contract*-theory of it to be even intelligible, let alone credible. As for Mr. Russell, his waverings on this crucial issue have been most instructive. In an early volume he had written that it is "important to realise that knowledge as to what is *intrinsically* of value is a priori in the same sense in which logic is a priori."[2] And it would seem that when he wrote *A Free Man's Worship* he was holding this objective view of ethics in another compartment of his mind. At a later date he appears to have grown more conscious of the inward incongruity of the two positions, and in the preface to a new volume he writes with reference to the earlier period: "I feel less convinced than I then did of the objectivity of good and evil."[3]

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[1] See above, pp. 323–325.

[2] *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 119.

[3] See the preface to the collection of essays entitled *Mysticism and Logic*. In *What I Believe*, published in 1925, the objectivity of moral distinctions seems at last to be entirely surrendered.

this broad outline of it, the path of duty is as clear as any knowledge we possess, and that in our awareness of the call wherewith it summons us to follow it, we come as near to absolute certainty as it is ever given to the race of man to do. It may often seem impossible to know what to *believe*, but there is always something which is worth *doing*, and which we know to be worth doing with an assurance that constitutes an imperative practical claim upon our wills. The search for the truth about the system of things of which we form a part is a long and arduous one and it may have its moments of utter despair; but even when the night of doubt and confusion is at its blackest, the values of right and noble conduct still stand firm. No night of doubt can ever make it doubtful to the earnest soul that it is right to be pure of mind and stout of heart, and, above all, that it right to help one's fellow traveller out of the ditch. I do not need to wait until I have succeeded in constructing a cosmology or theology in which man's relation to the system to which he belongs is made finally plain in order then to deduce from this construction a scheme of duties and a scale of values. On the contrary, it is with the consciousness of duties and the appreciation of values that I *begin*. Whatever may be true about the cosmos and my place in it, I am incapable of doubting that I *ought* to help my fellow-man when I see him in distress. Right is right, though the heavens fall.

We possess, therefore, in the moral consciousness a firm standing-ground from which we can hope to rise to the certainties of religion. And it is of vital importance for the theologian that he should clearly recognise this character of self-sufficiency attaching to our moral knowledge. The student of religion need not perhaps take sides with any particular school of moralists or commit himself to any one theory of morals in general, but it is quite essential to his proper understanding of the relation in which religion stands to morals that he should be in no sort of doubt about what Kant called the 'categorical' or 'apodictic' certainty of duty's claim, and Bishop Butler (perhaps the most notable of Kant's predecessors in this regard) the 'manifest authority of conscience.' The truth he must here grasp is that in our

there are no cases where the morally-minded man has to doubt; most certainly such do arise, though not so many as some people think, far fewer than some would be glad to think."

awareness of moral obligation there is contained a piece of original knowledge—knowledge, that is, of the truth of a proposition for which we either cannot give reasons, or which is more certain than any reasons which we may afterwards try to find for it. The consciousness of duty, said Kant, is "originally legislative," for "we cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason."[1] With exactly the same vision of a truth that has too often been neglected, Mr. (now the Earl of) Balfour wrote in his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt:*

> "The general propositions which really lie at the root of any ethical system must themselves be ethical, and can never be either scientific or metaphysical. In other words, if a proposition announcing obligation require proof at all, one term of the proof must always be a proposition announcing obligation, which itself requires no proof. . . . There is no artifice by which an ethical statement can be evolved from a scientific or metaphysical proposition or from any combination of such; and wherever the reverse appears to be the fact, it will always be found that the assertion which seems to be the basis of the ethical superstructure is in reality merely the 'minor' of a syllogism, of which the 'major' is the desired ethical principle."[2]

For my belief that I must do my duty no reason can be given and no reason is required. And although it may be in some sense possible for the after-reflection of ethics to assign something that might be called 'reasons' for my belief that it is, particularly, my duty to be unselfish, honourable, and pure, putting the things of others above my own things and the things of the body above the things of the soul, yet such 'reasons' are from the nature of the case less certain than the facts they are intended to explain. I may or may not be able to say 'why' selfishness is wrong, or I may think I know why and yet (with many another hapless moral philosopher) be quite wrong in the theory I have embraced; but all this does not in any way affect my intuitive certitude that selfishness *is* wrong. That is never an issue in ethiboth philosophers and historians.[1] Needless to say, such evidential priority may not, in the case of a particular individual, imply chronological priority. The fact of corporate tradition clearly interferes with the reproduction of the race's original order of knowledge in the learning-process of the individual. And even as regards the race itself, we certainly do not wish to imply that there ever was an historical period, of however brief duration, when mankind was ethical without being religious. "It does not follow," as Höffding well says, "that because religious values are secondary in comparison with other values, there must always be an interval of time between the experiences in which they manifest themselves and those in which the primary values assert themselves. Primary values often arise in a religious form from the outset, so that the two kinds of experience are made simultaneously. The distinction is reached by an abstraction or differentiation which need not necessarily occur."[2] But the point which really requires making is one first clearly made by Kant in his repudiation of theological ethics in favour of what he called ethical theology—namely, that whether or not the certitude of duty be prior in time to that of faith, it is always prior in evidence. It is, he tells us (in words that have already been quoted), "more in accordance both with human nature and with the purity of morals to base the expectation of a future world on the sentiments of a well-behaved soul than, contrariwise, to base its good behaviour on the hope of another world."

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[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.* (*Werke,* ed. Rosenkranz, vol. VIII), p. 142.

[2] *Op. cit.*, Appendix, pp. 337–338. Similarly Professor Sorley excellently writes in his *Moral Values and the Idea of God:* "It is the more usual, as it seems the more obvious, course to explain ethical ideas by reference to the nature of things than to take them as a clue for the interpretation of reality. But we have seen the difficulties of the former method. In it the characteristic notion of ethical valuation is never deduced; it is only introduced surreptitiously. From 'is' to 'ought,' from existence to goodness, there is no way that logic has not blocked. The other method, however, remains open to us." (P. 183.)

The certitude of duty is thus a genuine *prius* in the approach to faith. Unless appeal can be made to it, religious assurance can never be brought to birth in the soul. Unless the ultimate beliefs of religion can be brought home to an already-existing conscience, they will never appear to be more than pleasing fancies or interesting guesses at truth. The unseen world to which faith introduces us can become real to us only in proportion as it is indissociably related to whatsoever things we find in our experience to be honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report. Wherever the imperative claim of the ideal is weakly felt, the evidence of religion becomes thin and tenuous too. Since the certitude of duty is thus the bed-rock on which all else rests, it is of capital importance that it should itself appear as self-evidencing, as having its foundations in itself and requiring no support from outside. It was to the vindication of its self-evidencing and underivative character that Kant devoted a main part of his philosophical labour, and we cannot doubt that, however much the progress of thought since his day has changed the dress in which he clothed it, the central meaning of the doctrine of the Primacy of the Practical Exercise of Reason stands as firm as ever. In a sense its truth is gaining wider recognition among us with every day that passes; for it is the only solid foundation of whatever is true in all that calls itself Pragmatism, and in the many movements allied to Pragmatism, in our own time. But the broad meaning of it which we have here in mind is one which is capable of such simple statement as to lift it completely out of these and all other controversial regions. It is simply the truth that *there is nothing of which man is more certain than of his primary moral values.* Loyalty and love and honour, truthfulness and purity and unselfishness—there is no knowledge of which I am surer (and perhaps no other knowledge of which I am in the last resort so sure) than that these things are infinitely well worth seeking and that there is laid upon me an absolute obligation to seek them. No doubt there is room for uncertainty enough about the detail of duty. No doubt it is often painfully difficult to know, in an individual case, what we ought to do. And we need not even deny (as Kant, writing here under the influence of Rousseau, was always inclined to do) that there may be occasion for *some* honest perplexity even with regard to the broad outline of dutiful conduct.[1] But we do claim that, in respect of station is; and if I know what my station is, I know something too of what the organisation is to which my station belongs.

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[1] *Cf., e. g.*, G. F. Moore in his *Birth and Growth of Religion*; "There is a correlation between what man wants and what he thinks about the beings or being of—or in—which he seeks the satisfaction of his wants. The relation is reciprocal, but in religion, I repeat, the precedence is on the side of man's wants," (P. 18.) *Cf.* also Irving King, *The Development of Religion*, p. 127: "The religious is secondary to a social process of some sort originating in some other than a religious need, but becoming the ground for the development of the religious as such."

[2] *Op. cit.*, p.219. At the same time, and while not wishing to prejudge this issue in any way, I am myself inclined to follow a view like that expressed by Dean Inge when he writes: "Undoubtedly the 'taboos' which we find exerting so potent a sway over the lives of savages seem more like the 'categorical imperative' of Kant's philosophy than religious sanctions. . . . Historically, the flat prohibition proceeding from no known authority seems to be the earliest stage, the arbitrary order of the Deity the second. The third stage is, of course, the recognition that God has forbidden certain things because they are wrong, and not *vice versa*."—*Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 13.

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[1] Yet perhaps Mr. Bradley is right when he says in his *Ethical Studies* that "what is moral in any particular case is seldom doubtful." "I do not," he goes on, "say

The careful discrimination to which our analysis leads us at this point is one of quite cardinal importance, yet it has sometimes been received with a good deal of impatience. Upon what impossible razor-edge, it has been asked, is Kant here trying to balance himself? Where, after all, is the great difference between his *bête noire,* theological ethics, and his darling child, ethical theology? How can the moral law be apprehended as at the same time self-sufficient and not self-sufficient; as being utterly independent of all belief about God and the invisible world, and yet inevitably carrying such belief with it? Either it implies a God or it does not; and if it does, theological ethics are not to be condemned; while if it does not, ethical theology is not to be maintained.

An objection of this kind would be more disturbing if we did not feel so strongly that, however difficult may be the distinction on which (with Kant) we are here insisting, the difficulty is nevertheless not of our own making but is somehow in the facts. And, after all, is the distinction so very difficult? Was it not long ago known to the scholastic doctors in the form of the discrimination between the *ratio cognoscendi* and the *ratio essendi?* And was not Ritschl, despite some unnecessary heat in his way of saying it, fundamentally justified in recommending, in a passage already quoted, "the sapient persons" who pressed this objection upon him to cease troubling him until they had acquired "a thorough knowledge" of just this "elementary distinction"? For this is surely not the only scientific problem into the service of which a distinction of this kind must be drawn. In the realm of nature, for instance, are there not many causes which, though prior to their effects in the order of being, are yet posterior to them in the order of our knowledge of them, or in the order of evidence? Ether is, if the orthodox physicists are right, the *ratio essendi* of light, but light is for us the *ratio cognoscendi* of ether. The physicist believes that there would *be* no light if there were not ether, yet the existence of light is *his evidence* for the existence of ether; and his certainty of the former is not only prior in time to, but is also to the end of a more immediate kind than, his certainty of the latter.

Instead, however, of resting content with any such imperfect analogy, we shall do better to push the analysis of our own case a little deeper if we can. We have reached this point: that the consciousness of the moral claim, though it comes to us with an independent and underivative certitude of its own, yet leads us on to the affirmation of some kind of ground and source of it in the real order. But we may now ask, What is the nature of this 'leading on'? Its ground, of course, can be nothing else than a logical implication, and the mental process concerned is undoubtedly of the nature of inference. But that is not to say that we have here to do with anything like a conscious piece of deductive reasoning, still less with anything like *argumentation.* Indeed we seem here to be quite at the opposite pole from anything of that kind. The truth is that, under the long tuition of moral experience, the consciousness of the moral claim comes, by an almost imperceptible transition of thought, to be interpreted as an awareness of a Divine Reality. The process is not really a passage from believing in duty to believing in something else but is much rather a passage from one way of reading the meaning of duty to another way of reading it. For what religion does is just to give a deeper meaning to duty, a deeper significance to our values. Moreover we cannot think that man is ever at any stage without some dim consciousness, or premonition, of this deeper meaning. The seed of religion is in every man's heart. "Thou wouldst not be seeking Me, hadst thou not already found Me."[1] And the slow growth of a firmly established faith in the soul of the earnest seeker is perhaps more than anything else the gradual dawning of the realisation that in believing (as he has all the time believed) in duty he has been believing in more than he thought.

The discrimination which is so requisite at this point in our analysis has perhaps never received more penetrating treatment than by the late F. H. Bradley in his early volume of *Ethical Studies.*

"We know what is right in a particular case by what we may call an immediate judgment, or an intuitive subsumption. These phrases are perhaps not very luminous. . . . But the point I do wish to establish here is, I think, not at all obscure. The reader has first to recognise that moral cal science or anywhere else. If any man were to make an issue of it—were to say, for instance, that there is nothing the matter with selfishness, dishonesty, or unbridled sensuality—it might be difficult to know what to do with him, but we should at any rate not dream of *arguing* with him.

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[1] Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, 555.

Fortunately, however, the case does not arise, at least among the serious-minded; for, as has already been said, it is in the hold we have upon our ultimate moral values that we mortals come nearest to absolute certainty of knowledge. As the distinguished statesman-philosopher from whose earliest work we have just been quoting put it in the opening sentence of his second volume: "The two subjects on which professors of every creed, theological and antitheological, seem least anxious to differ are the general substance of the Moral Law and the general character of the sentiments with which it should be regarded."[1] Here then is firm standing-ground on which the man of faith may build his soul's house and the theologian his system. If only the foundational affirmations of religion can be made *as certain* as are our basic moral values, there will be few indeed who will ask for more. "Duty," wrote Henry Sidgwick, "is to me as real a thing as the physical world, though it is not apprehended in the same way."[2] Perhaps Kant would have said that it was more real. Certainly Plato would have said so—and would have contended that the physical world is not real at all except in so far as it partakes of this very Form—the Form of the Good. Into that we need not here enter, asking only to have it allowed to us that faith, in grounding itself upon our primary moral insights, is building on a foundation that is good enough for all right-minded men, and that if only something of the certainty which attaches to this foundation can be communicated to that which is built upon it, no man can reasonably ask for more.[3]

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[1] *Foundations of Belief*, chap. I.

[2] Quoted from the *Memoir* (p. 347) by Professor Pringle-Pattison. I may append these sentences from the same writer's *Methods of Ethics*, 6th ed., pp. 34–35: "I am aware that some persons will be disposed to answer all the preceding argument by a simple denial that they can find in their consciousness any such unconditional or categorical imperative as I have been trying to exhibit. If this is really the final result of self-examination in any case, then there is no more to be said. I, at least, do not know how to impart the notion of moral obligation to any one who is entirely devoid of it."

[3] There is in the writings of Tolstoy after his conversion much fine insistence upon this point. As it has been well and summarily put by Bishop Gore (*Belief in God*,

The Witness of our Values to the Structure of Reality

II

Our next question is as to the nature of the transition by which man rises from this primary certitude of duty to the further certitude of faith.

Put very generally, the answer must be that although on the one hand the absolute nature of duty's claim is apprehended by us in an immediate way and in apparently entire independence of any prior beliefs of a cosmological or theological kind, yet on the other hand the recognition of this claim inevitably tends to create for itself a certain context of belief about the real constitution of things. Kant was quite certainly right in his contention (which was largely also an original psychological discovery) that the moral consciousness *begins* with the awareness of a claim or an 'ought'; but was he not as certainly right (and was his psychological insight any less epoch-making) when he added that the moral consciousness always *goes on* to be something more than this and, in fact, to develop into a further awareness of a reality from which the claim derives, an 'is' behind the 'ought'? Our values refuse to hang in a permanent state of suspension in the thin air of the ideal; rather do they, as soon as apprehended, demand a cosmic setting for themselves; or indeed they weave for themselves a cosmic setting out of their own substance, or, to change the metaphor, they unfold out of themselves a scaffolding that reaches down to the world of reality. For the judgment-form 'I ought,' though indeed it is the very root and type of immediate and certain knowledge, has nevertheless never appeared capable of standing by itself in isolation from some kind of context in the reality to which the 'I' in question belongs. Undeniably there are many things which I 'ought' to do and be; I am incapable of doubting that; but how can it be that I ought to do and be them, if they bear no relation to that Whole of things of which I am apparently an organic part? Whence can the necessity derive, if not from that Whole? My duties must after all be the duties of my station; and hence, if I know what my duties are, I know something also of what my

Amer. ed., p. 41), the ground of all our knowledge of ultimate reality seemed to him to be "the feeling for the good life, the recognition of it when we see it, and the assurance that it must be worth while to live it, and that it must turn out to be in accordance with right reason."

convictions about the ultimate nature and constitution of things. Setting out from the knowledge, which is the essence of morality, that "right is right, though the heavens fall," it has arrived at the faith that *because* right is right the highest Heaven will not fall or fail; and that is the essence of religion.

The Logic of Faith.

III

But does this now mean that the truth of religion is capable of rigid logical demonstration? Does it mean that by a simple process of argument we can show the truth of it to be implied in certain ethical facts which are themselves too fundamental to admit of being questioned? This question is sure to be pressed upon us, and it is important that we should know how to answer it.

To begin with, it is at least plain that such proof as there can be is no more than a drawing out into more consciously deductive and syllogistic form of the thought-process that is always present in religion itself. We can in no sense substitute, as the authors of the old theistic proofs seemed to think themselves able to substitute, for the train of reflection by which faith comes to birth in the soul another and different train of reflection. On the contrary, the most we can do is to bring religion's own logic into sharper detail, with each successive step in it showing up more clearly, than is commonly found necessary in religion itself. Doubtless this does constitute a proof, or at least it is the nearest thing to a proof that is to be found in any normative science. But it is *not* comparable to a proof of mathematics or natural science, which neither necessarily represents the process by which the truth to be proved first came to be known, nor is in any way implicitly contained in our ordinary knowledge of it.

Indeed it is with this attempt to make fully explicit faith's ✓ own implicit logic that theological science reaches the core of its problem. Its duty is to exhibit, with the sharpest possible detail and under the greatest possible degree of magnification, the nature of the passage which religion makes from value to reality, from a moral obligation to a moral cosmos. In our own time, and in worthy pursuance of the tradition whose history was sketched in the last chapter but one, much hard and courageous philosophical labour is being consecrated to this task.

What we have ourselves to say on this matter has largely been said already, but may here be said again a little more fully. What faith, when squarely interrogated, seems centrally to insist upon is that in our consciousness of duty, or of ultimate values, there is contained an authentic intimation of the nature of the system to which we belong; and hence the only proper apologetic for religion is that which sets out the logic of this insistence. Perhaps there is no better way of setting it out than the very simple one of asking what else it can mean to say that I 'must' do this or this, except that the nature of things demands that I do it. Can any possible meaning be attached to absolute obligation, or to ultimate value, if these are conceived as having no sanction in the all-enclosing system? If I am right in feeling that it is absolutely demanded of me that I be pure in heart, and just and honourable in all my dealings, then can this mean less than that reality demands these things of me? And if reality demands these things of me, then reality must be interested in moral value; it must have a stake in the moral issue; it must be on the side of the good and against the unworthy and the evil. But that is to say that it is a moral Being itself, not indifferent to moral distinctions but, on the contrary, supremely sensitive to them, and really and deeply caring whether good or evil prevails. The ultimate reality must thus be One Who loves the Good.

The argument, for all its simplicity, is nevertheless as inescapable as any argument in the sphere of values can ever be. The only possible escape from it is to deny the presence of absolute values in our experience, or, as Kant preferred to put it, the unconditional nature of the obligation with which our duty presents itself to our wills—and that, as we saw, is how the most keen-witted enemies of religion, from the Greek Sophists down to Mr. Russell, have usually tried to escape it. The fundamental truth of religion will never be endangered until somebody succeeds in presenting us with a consistent theory of morals which does full justice to the deepest things in our knowledge of good and evil without in any way relating them to a reality beyond ourselves. But can that ever be? The truth is, surely, that *we* are often indifferent enough to our values. When we call them values, we do not mean that *we* value them, but much rather that they are valuable in themselves, whether we value them or not; as it has judgments are not discursive; next, that nevertheless they do start from and rest on a certain basis; and then if he puts the two together, he will see that they involve what he may call the 'intuitive understanding,' or any other name, so long as he keeps in sight the two elements and holds them together.

"On the head that moral judgments are not discursive, no one, I think, will wish me to stay long. . . . In practical morality no doubt we may reflect on our principles, but I think it is not too much to say that we never do so, except where we have come upon a difficulty of particular application. If any one thinks that a man's ordinary judgment 'this is right or wrong' comes from the having a rule before the mind and bringing the particular case under it, he may be right; and I cannot try to show that he is wrong. I can only leave it to the reader to judge for himself. . . .

"Taking for granted, then, that our ordinary way of judging in morals is not by reflection or by explicit reasoning, we have now to point out the other side of the fact, *viz.*, that these judgments are not mere isolated impressions, but stand in an intimate and vital relation to a certain system which is their basis. . . . Every man has the morality he has made his own in his mind, and he 'sees' or 'feels' or 'judges' accordingly, though he does not reason explicitly from data to a conclusion. . . . Our moral judgments are intuitive subsumptions."[1]

In our intuitive judgment of right and wrong there is therefore somehow contained an implicit reference to a system which supports, explicates, and justifies it. Normally, this system is not present to consciousness in any explicit way, yet in some real sense it *is* latently contained in the conscious judgment. Now it may be difficult to know what psychological account we are to give of this 'implicit' existence in an intuition of a system which reflection afterwards reveals to have been its logical basis from the beginning. There can, indeed, be little doubt that we are here at the limit of our present psychological knowledge and understanding, and perhaps on the verge of a new and very revolutionary discovery as to the nature of mind. But of the facts themselves there can be no doubt, and it was the admirable service of Mr. Bradley to state the facts very frankly as he saw them, however difficult he might find it to explain them.

Now the system which Mr. Bradley found to be implied, as their ground and basis, in our intuitive moral judgments, and which reflection afterwards brings to consciousness, is the system of what he calls "my station and its duties." Most of us will feel that he has here hit the mark. It would be difficult to find a phrase better expressive of the moral ideal on which reflection throws us all back, or one more in line with the teaching of the two great thinkers who first faced this question, Plato and Aristotle, than just "my station and its duties."

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 174–180.

But now the question is whether, if by "my station" there be meant no more than my *civic* station or even than my station in human society as a whole, this phrase really expresses all that is implicitly contained in my intuition of duty's claim. Our feeling surely is that it does not. The thought of my place in our earthly society, and of the relationships involved in that place, is not a thought in which the mind can finally rest. However deeply satisfying it is, it discovers itself sooner or later to be no journey's end, but only a half-way house. For there remains a further question, a further system to which this first one must still be referred. Human society is after all but a fragment of the larger order of things in which we live and move and have our being. And it is impossible to feel that there is implicitly contained in the intuition of duty no reference at all to this larger and absolute system, but only a reference to the narrower one; for nothing could be clearer than that the terms in which duty asserts its claim are terms of a quite absolute, and not merely a relative and partial, obligation. We cannot, surely, do justice to the implicit meaning of our consciousness of duty if we say merely: "Human society demands that I be pure and true and tender and brave." To *that* the answer could be made, as it was made by the materialistic Sophists of Plato's day: "Society may indeed demand these things of me, but what if the wider system of things to which society itself belongs does not at all demand them? And what if I prefer the wider allegiance?" As an answer to a purely humanitarian view of the foundations of duty this declaration is as valid as possible. Yet we all know well enough that it is *not* valid against the voice of conscience itself. And so we come to see that what the voice of conscience actually does say is something more like this: "The very heart and nature of things, the most ultimate reality that there is, demands that I be pure and true and tender and brave." *No obligation can be absolute which does not derive from the Absolute.*

So it is that human reflection, in every clime and time, has unfolded out of its basic consciousness of duty and value certain been finely expressed, "our values are not merely emotions, but commands."[1] And when we say that we 'ought' to do right, we do not mean that we want to do right, but much rather that the nature of things wants us to do right, whether we want to do right or not.

The arch-fallacy of dogmatic naturalism has been its persistent ignoring of this witness of our values to the nature of the system to which we belong. It has constructed its theory of reality on the basis of perceived fact alone—and usually of perceived fact as it is apprehended and ordered by means of the categories of mathematics and physics, or, as Kant called them, the categories of the theoretic reason. It takes no account at all of the light that is thrown upon reality by our knowledge of good and evil. It neglects altogether what Émile Boutroux called *l'au-delà intérieur.* Every proposition which begins with the words 'I must' can obviously be thrown into the form 'Reality is such that I must . . .' But naturalism has been largely blind to this possible avenue to knowledge of reality. It has left the moral categories severely alone, and has pictured Ultimate Being as a giant system of Euclidean space wherein Democritean atoms combine and separate according to Newtonian laws. And so it has become a prey to what William James called "the determinism of the mere mechanical intellect which will not hear of a moral dimension to existence."[2] Yet its stridency has availed but little, for all the time man has gone on living and acting not as if naturalism were true but by the light of the very different truth which is written plainly in his heart. All the time he has continued to hear a more certainly authentic voice which said to him: "Not spaces and bulks and atoms and forces are *what really matters in this universe,* but truth and honour and courage and fealty and all things lovely and of good report." That has been to him the most indefeasible of all assurances, and he has taken it as the least fallible revelation of the lines on which reality, in the last resort, is built.

Something may be added to the forcefulness of this 'logic of faith' by stating it in the negative form of a *reductio ad absurdum,* and asking what would be the probable effect on the moral consciousness and moral life of mankind of a thoroughgoing denial of any trans-human objectivity to our values and standards of good and evil. If, day by day, I were to carry about with me in my heart a purely naturalistic picture of the universe; if I kept reminding myself, as I tried to do my duty, that it made no difference to anybody or anything outside our little human society whether I did it or not, and that *in the end* it would make no difference even to that society, because that society can in the end have nothing before it but utter extinction and an eternal night in which nothing that it now cares for will leave any trace or echo at all; if I nourished in myself a steady belief in these negations, would my conscience still remain unimpaired in its 'tenderness,' and my zeal for that which is good be undiminished in its ardency? It is difficult to imagine that any one will be bold enough to answer that question with a quite confident affirmative. No doubt we *ought* to be able to say to ourselves, as Robertson of Brighton still said to himself when the night of his doubt was at its darkest: "If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward."[1] And indeed it is impossible to believe that we should not, in whatever circumstance, continue to say this to ourselves with *some* degree of belief. The question is, however, whether that utter and serene assurance of these things which is the proper accompaniment of human life would not, under influence of such denials as we have described, tend more and more to become perplexed and confused, and perhaps distorted and falsified. However direct a hold we may have on our ideals, the recognition of a patent incongruity between them and our deliberately adopted intellectual results must in the end act as a corrosive upon them: and of these results it must be said: "Their word will eat as doth a canker." "If, then," writes the Earl of Balfour, "naturalism is to hold the field, the feelings and opinions inconsistent with naturalism must be foredoomed to suffer change; and how, when that change shall come about, it can do otherwise than eat all nobility out of our conception of conduct and all worth out of our conception of life, I am wholly unable to understand."[2] And that surely, for all of us, is a reduction to the impossible and the absurd; it is what Kant called an *absurdum morale* and Tennyson "an idle case":

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[1] Arthur Clutton-Brock, *Studies in Christianity,* p. 14.

[2] In a letter to Shadworth Hodgson; see *Atlantic Monthly,* July, 1920.

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[1] See Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 303.

[2] *Foundations of Belief*, part I, chap. IV.

"O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruis'd the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods."[1]

This negative side of the logic that is implicit in religious faith is, indeed, capable of being worked out in much greater detail and of being applied to many individual problems of theology. It has frequently been applied, for instance, to the problem of personal immortality. There have been those who have spoken as if only the race, or the type, should be held to be immortal, the individual being of no moment in God's eyes. But attention has rightly been called to the incongruity that exists between such a conception and our own highest standards of value, and to the consequent danger that such a conception, if really embraced, would present to the moral consciousness. "For," it has been argued, "if the Divine righteousness may lightly 'scrap' the individual, human righteousness may do the same."[2] "Suppose," another recent writer has put it, "we found that the Great Soul of the World is making use of us as instruments for its own glory, or as pawns in a great game of evolution . . ., sacrificing us for that high purpose, and not minding how many of us it sacrificed, then I say that Soul would be doing the very thing which when we do it to one another we recognise as unjust."[3] But any such discrepancy between our beliefs and our values, between our religion and our conduct, between our teaching about how the gods act and our teaching about how men should act, is (as Plato, in his celebrated criticism of the poetic myths of the Greek dramatists and lyrists, long ago insisted) a menace of the most serious kind to the purity of morals. Our values, in a good phrase which we have already borrowed, "need reality to climb on." There is no spiritual stability in an outlook which denies to the Almighty Power those excellences which it demands of the finite individual. Such an outlook must in the end disrupt itself; and, to those whose hold is firm upon the prime certitude of duty, the disruption can surely take but one form—the form of a nascent faith. When the youthful Carlyle, sunk in what he called "the fixed starless Tartarean dark" of nineteenth-century unbelief, came to cry out in his misery, "Is there no God then? . . . Has the word Duty no meaning? Is what we call Duty no Divine Messenger and Guide, but a false earthly Fantasm, made up of desire and fear?"[1] there could in the end be but one issue; when the lists were drawn *thus*, he said, he could at last "take the devil by the nose."[2]

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[1] *In Memoriam*, XXXV.

[2] B. H. Streeter in *Immortality*, p. 85.

[3] L. P. Jacks, *A Living Universe*, p. 123.

An Objection from the Devotees of a Purely Secular Morality.

IV

We pause to consider an objection which is sometimes directed against the very heart of this argument. It is claimed by some that the desire to find any support, not to say sanction, for our values in the real order of things is not only quite unnecessary but also definitely prejudicial to morality and, in fact, itself immoral. Not only have we no kind of assurance that there is any cosmic sympathy for all our ardours and endurances or any conservation of our values, but we ought not to *want* such an assurance. "Virtue is its own reward"; our values are valuable in themselves, and for their own sakes, quite apart from any belief in their cosmic standing or any guaranty of their continuance, such as would indeed serve only to confuse the moral issue.

Those who make this sort of objection always speak as if what lay behind our belief in a real moral order were an insufficient recognition of the fact that duty is an end-in-itself and that our values are valuable for their own sake alone. But in truth it is *just because* we see duty to be an end-in-itself and our values to be of an intrinsic and absolute kind that we feel bound to attribute to them a cosmic significance. If our values were only relative and 'hypothetical,' we should be able to explain them with reference to our finite social order; it is because they are absolute that we must attribute them to the Absolute. That was precisely Kant's point; it was because duty was (as he realised more clearly, perhaps, than any previous thinker had done) an end-in-itself, because right remained right under every conceivable circumstance, because the imperative of conscience had *no* conditions attached to it, that he insisted we were here in touch with nothing less than the final structure of reality—which must therefore be conceived as a Realm of Ends. There is a sentence in one of George Tyrrell's books which puts the whole matter as in a nutshell: "Only an eternal and universal end can explain the imperative and absolute character of Right; and humanity is neither eternal nor universal. The Right must be worth doing even were the world to vanish the next moment."[1]

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[1] *Sartor Resartus*, book II, chap. VII.

[2] See the account in Tulloch's *Movements of Religious Thought*, pp. 179 ff.

Thus it is precisely those teachers who have taught us to regard duty's claim as ultimate and to dispense altogether with the underpropping of prudential and utilitarian sanctions that have been most insistently aware of the theological implications of duty. It is not indeed as a sanction or a reward, nor even primarily as a support, that our values "need reality to climb on," but rather as an assurance of their own reality. But, it may be said, is not that assurance native to them, and part of their consciousness of themselves, rather than something that need be *added* to them—by religion? Certainly it is. Moral values have come to man from the beginning in a religious setting, and what we are now opposing is precisely the attempt to disengage them from that setting. Naturalism has never yet succeeded in making it credible to us that our values can continue to live and breathe when they have been robbed of their ancestral faith in their own cosmic significance. We can do without the reward, we can do without the glory, perhaps we can do without the spur and without the crutch, but we cannot do without the assurance that the struggle on which we are engaged is a real fight and a fight that counts. To renounce *that* faith is no true heroism but only foolish heroics, no noble self-renunciation but only disloyalty to the deepest thing in our souls, and a selling of our most sacred birthright. "I do not," wrote William James, in words which might almost have been taken from 'The Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason,' "believe it to be healthy-minded to nurse the notion that ideals are self-sufficient and require no actualisation to make us content. It is a quite unnecessarily heroic form of resignation and sour grapes."[1]

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[1] *Christianity at the Cross-roads*, p. 122.

With the sincere and honest doubt as to whether our values can indeed *find* any reality to climb upon, we must have the most patient sympathy. With the declaration that it is not even *desirable* that they should find a reality to climb upon, we have much less patience. It is, in fact, difficult to avoid the feeling that the devotees of 'mere morality' and 'atheistic ethics' are seriously cheating themselves in this regard. It will usually be found that their renunciation is not really so complete as they suppose it to be, and that they are supporting their spirits by embracing some faith that is actually, when dragged into the cold light of day, even more difficult of establishment than that which they have laid aside—a faith, perhaps, in the necessarily upward trend of biological evolution, in the inevitable and unilinear progress of the human race, or in some other equally vulnerable generality. Indeed, as has sometimes been pointed out, atheistic morality, far from being nobly purged of all desire for lower satisfactions, is often very frankly utilitarian. It is only the *highest* ends that it really renounces, and it consoles itself for this renunciation by clutching all the more eagerly at an end less high and also, if only it were fully examined, less certainly guaranteed to us. "Its resignation," says Troeltsch, "is not so much a renunciation of any happiness to follow moral action; for the individual and collective weal of the human race is an end for it also, and indeed is for it an unusually strong motive. Its resignation is rather a renouncement of any foothold and ground for morality in the nature of an all-supporting and all-controlling God, and of all the new motives to action that would thus arise."[2]

The Limits of Deductive Proof

V

We have now set down, as clearly as we are able, and in something approaching a rigorous deductive form, what we believe to be the logic of faith. We have formulated what we hold to be the one valid argument for the truth of religion. But now we must carefully see to it that we do not carry away with us a wrong idea as to what this argument is good for, and as to the kind of value and effectiveness it can be expected to possess. What is the place of argument, of deductive demonstration, in such a sphere as religion? It is a question which has been haunting us all along and which we must now finally try to settle.

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[1] *The Familiar Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 270.

[2] In the essay on *Atheistische Ethik* in the second volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 539. The whole essay may be most warmly recommended to those anxious to pursue this matter further

To begin with, it must be clearly understood that formal deduction is always, to a greater or lesser extent, of the nature of an afterthought—that is, it is a later schematisation of a process which the mind has already completed by less laborious means. It is only in the philosophical classroom that we ever put our thoughts into *absolutely* strict logical form. In real life we always more or less 'jump' to conclusions without a conscious ordering of all the premises into major and minor. But there is none the less a vast difference between different fields of our knowledge in respect of the extent to which this ideal limit is approached. We come closest to it in pure mathematics; where, for instance, it is true that mankind actually did not know that the three angles of any triangle are together equal to two right angles until a Greek geometer arrived at that conclusion by a syllogistic process that may have required only a little polishing after the event to make it worthy to appear in Euclid's *Elements*. Nothing in real life comes so near to the logician's ideal as the process by which a new mathematical truth is discovered. Now there can be no doubt that in this respect religion lies at the very other end of the scale from such a field of knowledge as geometry. We cannot believe that the process of reflection by which man, in virtue of his new-won nature as rational, first rose to a religious view of the world had any conscious separation of premise and conclusion in it at all. The greatest of contemporary logicians has said that logical inference is always "a construction followed by an intuition."[1] Accepting this statement, we should say that while in the inference that leads to geometrical or arithmetical discovery the element of construction is paramount, in that which leads to *religious* discovery the element of intuition is almost everything. And this fact alone should have been a sufficient reason against the Cartesian attempt to model a constructive theology on the thirteen books of Euclid's *Elements*—as indeed Pascal saw clearly in Descartes' own time.

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[1] F. H. Bradley, *Principles of Logic*, 1st ed., p. 235.

It is plain enough, then, that it was not as the result of an argument that faith first arose in the world and that it is not as the result of an argument that it normally arises in men's minds to this day.[1] But, as a persistent 'rationalism' is likely still to ask us, may it not sometimes arise in this way? Is it not possible that the argument we have formulated should, of itself alone, be effective in bringing religious belief to birth in the soul of some unbeliever? And in what is the commonest (if indeed it is not the only) form of total unbelief known to us—the unbelief of one who has lost his early faith—would not argument be the *only* way in which the situation could be met at all?

Well, we are far from wishing to disparage the utility of argumentation or to minimise its importance in its own proper sphere. In determining one's choice between two well-canvassed alternatives that concern some point of greater or less detail in our system of religious belief, argument is unquestionably of the highest value. Moreover even as regards the first step in faith, which is rather the step *to* faith, it has the highly significant negative value of clearing away such hindrances as have their source in natural-scientific and metaphysical dogmatism. And as these hindrances have historically proved themselves to constitute the most important, and perhaps the sole, cause of militant and dogmatic total unbelief, it may well be claimed that argument has a necessary and indispensable place in every process that leads to the recovery of a lost faith. On the other hand we must point out that the clearing away of obstacles, and especially of obstacles which have no right to be there, is a different process from the laying of a sure foundation; and it is only with this latter process that we are now concerned. Our question is whether we can think it normal and likely, or even possible, that the presentation of a mere argument of any sort should actually and originally bring faith to birth in the soul of the unbeliever. And it is this question that we feel bound to answer in the negative.

But why, it will be asked, should this be? If the argument in question is really the valid extraction of a conclusion, by means of a correctly distributed middle term, from a major premise that is certainly known to be true, then why should it fail to carry conviction? The sufficient answer is that in this case the major premise is a *judgment of value,* and that the apprehension of value stands at the opposite pole from the apprehension of what we regard as mere 'brute' fact. Kant, who was among the first to grasp this truth clearly, spoke of it as the different manner of functioning of the theoretic and practical reason. More recently it has been spoken of as a distinction between the processes of observation and description (of fact) on the one hand and the process of appreciation (of value) on the other. The distinction (as, it will be remembered,[1] Ritschl rightly saw) must not be made too absolute, for there is no such thing as *mere* observation and description without any admixture of appreciation in it. Yet, short of drawing an absolute line, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the differences that are discernible between the manner of our discovery of truths about such things as numbers and angles and weights and measures and distances on the one hand, and the manner of our appreciation of moral excellences and defects on the other. And in particular *this* is notable about our appreciation of value—that it is a gradual process which admits of many degrees of perfectibility. We cannot say to a man: "You either do or do not know the nobility of self-sacrifice and the beauty of holiness." *Nobody* fully knows the nobility of self-sacrifice or the beauty of holiness, and such insight as we have into these things is widely various and grows with our growing wisdom and increases with every increase in grace.

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[1] "Faith," we read in the *Pensées*, "is a gift of God; do not think we say it is a gift of reasoning." (ed. Brunschvicg, 279).

Now the major premise from which the logic of faith proceeds is, as we have seen, not only a value-judgment but *the* value-judgment *par excellence*—the consciousness of duty's claim upon our wills, the awareness of a distinction between a higher way that must be followed and a lower way that must be eschewed. That this is a consciousness and an awareness which admits of infinite gradations and nuances of perfection will be denied by no one. There are not two of us who are quite equally alive to duty's claim, quite equally sensitive to the loveliness of love, quite equally possessed by the charm of goodness. As we grow in moral stature the voice of conscience becomes clearer and more articulate to us, and the deep meaning and imperious authority of duty more profoundly realised by us. And it is precisely on this greater clarity and profounder realisation that the evidence of religion, which is essentially (as has been said) but a deeper way of regarding the significance of goodness, seems as a matter of fact to depend. Some sense of duty we all have, and therefore it is perhaps true to say that we are none of us without the germ of faith in God; but it is in proportion as our sense of duty becomes deepened and refined by the experience of life and by the practice of progressive obedience to its behests that its fuller and diviner meaning comes home to us with compelling power, and faith becomes triumphantly definite and secure. The mere passive contemplation of the moral law never led any man to a realisation of its deeper meaning, but only an active surrender to its ever-developing demands. Argument is therefore here at this far-reaching disadvantage, that it carries conviction only in proportion to the depth of each man's moral consciousness, and that in that same proportion it is likely to have been already anticipated by the swifter processes of the intuitive understanding. For after all it is not as if the logic of religion were a very elaborate process of deduction requiring a clear head to follow it. Rather is faith, like all good things, as simple in its working as it is mighty in its effect; being but a name for the fact that the better we understand what (even in their human manifestations) love and goodness are, the more clearly prophetic do they become to us of the deep heart of reality itself.

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[1] See above, pp. 285 f.

Perhaps we have now said enough to show how little can be expected of and accomplished by formal proof in such a region as that with which we have here to do. It is not clear thinking that is here needed, but deep, intimate, experimental acquaintance with that reality from which our thinking starts; and that is a thing of endless and incommunicably fine gradations which no argument, however subtle, can ever quite catch and tame to its use. "Nothing," the Baron von Hügel has said, "is more certain than that the richer is any reality, the higher in the scale of being, and the more precious our knowledge of it, the more in part obscure and inexhaustible, the less immediately transferable, is our knowledge of that reality."[1] "We get to know such realities," he has said again, "slowly, laboriously, intermittently, partially; we get to know them, not inevitably nor altogether apart from our dispositions, but only if we are sufficiently awake to care to know them, sufficiently humble to welcome them, and sufficiently generous to pay the price continuously which is strictly necessary if this knowledge and love are not to shrink but grow. We indeed get to know realities in proportion as we become worthy to know them—in proportion as we become less self-occupied, less self-centred, more outward-moving, less obstinate and insistent, more gladly lost in the crowd, more rich in giving all we have, and especially all we are, our very selves."[1]

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[1] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, (first series) p. 11.

ion is the ultimate organ of spiritual development.

VI

Thus we come to see that in the last resort the determining conditions of religious belief are moral conditions. It is not by developing our logical acumen nor yet our powers of speculative inquiry, but by deepening our moral experience and clarifying our moral insight, that we can hope to come to a firmer faith in the Divine; not by sharpening our wits, but by dowering ourselves more richly

> " . . . with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love."

It is only in such measure as there is fresh upon our souls a vivid realisation and vision of what words like love and duty and honour actually *mean* that the heart's desire for God becomes heightened into anything that can properly be called a conviction of His reality. Nothing counts here but the firmness of the hold we have upon our values and the "liveliness and steadiness" with which they are present to our minds in all their proper richness and depth. Hence it is that the faith even of a single individual varies in a very real sense from moment to moment. The vision of God does not come to us equally at all times; and there are some times when we almost seem to be living on what has gone before, though not without the hope that what we have once known we may know again. "There is a difference"—so run the opening words of Emerson's much-read essay on *The Oversoul*—"between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences." Moreover such moments of insight are never moments of dispassionate cogitation, but always of active participation and whole-hearted self-surrender. What avails us here is not *theōria* but *praxis*. Not to him who passively contemplates them do our values reveal their Divine significance and depth, but only to him who yields himself to their imperious claim. And therefore it is that, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 104. *Cf.* Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, 574: "Religion is so great a thing that it is only fair that those who will not take the trouble to seek it should be forced to go without it."

The essential meaning of this great beatitude of our Lord's has perhaps never been better paraphrased than in the Johannine words: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine."[2] It will be remembered from an earlier chapter how this was the one scriptural saying to which Ritschl always made appeal when confronted with the question of the ultimate conditions of religious assurance.[3] And more than twenty years before the appearance of Ritschl's work the same passage had been chosen by Frederick Robertson of Brighton, that greatest of nineteenth-century preachers, as the text for a sermon which was afterwards to prove very widely influential and to which he gave the significant title, *Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge*.[4] Nevertheless it is neither to Ritschl nor to Robertson, but once again to Blaise Pascal, that the credit must be given for first naturalising upon the soil of modern philosophy the general line of thought that is here represented. When the long reign of rationalism had at last reached its jubilee in the Cartesian theology it was Pascal who was first heard protesting that it is not by geometry but by love and charity that the knowledge of God is to be reached and (in what is surely one of the greatest sayings of all time) that "Human things must be known in order to be loved, but divine things must

[1] Matt. 5 : 8.

[2] John 7 : 17.

[3] *Cf. Justification and Reconciliation*, vol. III, Eng. transl., pp. 24, 226.

[4] The discourse will be found in the second volume of the sermons, pp. 94 ff.

be loved in order to be known."[1] How nearly identical with these are Ritschl's words in defending himself against the opponents of his most characteristic doctrine:

> "To be sure, people say that we must first know the nature of God and Christ ere we can ascertain their worth for us. . . . The truth rather is that we know the nature of God and Christ only in their worth for us."[2]

Yet indeed this truth, however slow it was to find adequate expression in theological theory, has always been in the secure possession of the Christian Church. It has always been the received teaching that the true knowledge of God is "hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes." The assurance of the Divine Companionship has in every age been promised not alone to the learned thinker, nor to him in any wise pre-eminently, but to all those who have sought it with a true and humble heart. It is pride and falsehood and self-will that have been held to blur the beatific vision, and not stupidity or ignorance. And surely the deep wisdom of this discrimination cannot now be gainsaid. Surely we all know and feel that in this exalted region a coldly intellectual acumen will not safely carry us a single step. What is here required is not a clear head but a properly attuned soul; and discernment rather than any kind of cleverness. For in a realm where the merely speculative possibilities and alternatives are so vastly numerous as they have here proved themselves to be, a train of logic may well lead us wildly astray into a limbo of phantasmal unreality, whereas the "even-balanced soul" which sees life steadily and sees it whole will never entirely miss the truth. Doubtless into the whole business of truth-seeking there enters, besides that dialectical skill (or clear-headedness) which is of the intellect alone, a certain broad wisdom or power of judgment which is a fruit rather of the undivided personality; but while in seeking the answer to a problem of arithmetic or geometry this second element is hardly called into play at all, it counts for almost everything when we come to face such a question as that of the final meaning of life. Not to the *savant* in his study will this light come, but to those who are face to face with the full actualities of living; to the eager and simple of heart; and to each in such measure as he is able to receive it. "A knowledge of the universe," it has been boldly, and yet not too boldly, said, "can be obtained only by love and that interaction of conduct and belief which love produces."[1] "We can only reach truth through charity," wrote Pascal, translating Augustine's "*Non intratur in veritatem, nisi per charitatem.*"[2]

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[1] *De l'esprit géométrique*, ed. Brunschvicg, p. 185. Pascal's thought has thus been summarised by Edouard Droz (*Le Scepticisme de Pascal*, pp. 106 f.): "Dans l'ordre humain . . . la méthode géométrique est assurément la plus parfaite, parce qu'elle est la mieux faite pour donner satisfaction à la raison pure. Dans l'ordre divin, qui est celui de l'amour, c'est la méthode de charité qu'il faut suivre."

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, Eng. transl., p. 212.

There is, however, more than one respect in which this line of thought, if eagerly pursued, requires to be most carefully guarded against error. Some have been too quick to conclude that because the conditions of belief are moral conditions therefore all unbelief is due to sin and is, in fact, a sufficient index of the moral state of the unbeliever. But such a conclusion is as contrary to sound judgment in the matter as the logic which leads to it is fallacious. The religious history of the nineteenth century has abundantly shown that it is often the finest and purest souls among us who are ordained to pass through just this 'dark night of the soul,' and that often

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

When light fails us, it is indeed our bounden duty to ask ourselves whether we have really deserved light, whether we have sought it with enough of diligence and single-heartedness, whether we have rid our souls, so far as in us lies, of whatever might blunt and confuse our capacity to receive it. This question, we say, every man should put to *himself*, but never perhaps to his neighbour.[3] Moreover even to himself he must not put it as if there could be but one answer. For although singleness of heart in seeking is indeed a necessary condition of finding, and although a heart *entirely* single and free from sin might well be held to be of itself alone a sufficient condition of finding, because able of its own irresistible power to overcome all possible obstacles, yet we cannot suppose it true that sin is the only obstacle which has here to be overcome. Incident to our human finitude are many other hindrances to the clear vision of the Infinite. Crushing adversity may be one such hindrance. Prejudice and preconception arising from overhasty or over-dogmatic doctrines of natural science may be another. Indeed the principle which lies at the root of this whole matter is that what is directly prescribed to us or demanded of us is not what we shall believe but what we shall do, and accordingly that what is directly blameworthy is not unbelief but only lovelessness and sin. For if only we do our best in *seeking*, what we *find* is not in our hands to determine, but in the hands of Him Whom we seek; and is accordingly not expected of us, but rather given to us. There is good cheer for perplexed souls in the New Testament reminder that "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him,"[1] as well as in the already quoted and hardly less famous words of the *Pensées: "Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne me possédais. Ne t'inquiète donc pas."*

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[1] Arthur Clutton-Brock, *Studies in Christianity*, p. 11. The whole passage (pp. 11–12) is worth looking at.

[2] *De l'esprit géométrique*, ed. Brunschvicg, p. 185.

[3] As, for instance, Pascal was a little too ready to do: "You say that if you had faith, you would soon give up your pleasures. I answer that if you gave up your pleasures, you would soon have faith." *Pensées*, ed. Brunschvicg, 240.

And so there is suggested to us another respect in which our present line of thought requires to be guarded against error. For if on the one hand it is true that the vision of God is granted only to those who are morally prepared to receive it, on the other hand it is no less true that the enjoyment of the vision itself is the only means by which we ever reach any real attainment of our moral ends. On the one hand, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord,"[2] while on the other, "without faith it is impossible to satisfy him."[3] How then are we to bring the two sides of the truth together? The old Protestant orthodoxy would have answered that, faith being in its very essence a gift of God to sinful men whose own righteousness is but as "filthy rags," the precondition of its reception by us cannot be any positive moral achievement on our part, but only a keen sense of our own sinfulness. In principle this answer is probably correct enough, but there are one or two things that must be noted concerning it. In the first place, a keen "sense of sin," which is to say a bitter and ever-present consciousness of the disparity between one's ideals and one's achievements, is a thing which we associate not with complete moral depravity but rather with an unusual degree of conscientiousness and earnestness of moral endeavour. It is therefore not an entirely negative thing, but has in it something of positive goodness. Moreover the doctrine that a 'sense of sin' is the only moral prerequisite of religious insight, while it may largely cover the case of the first awakening of faith in the soul, does not seem to leave room for the larger and equally vital truth that with each successive growth in holiness our vision of the eternal world becomes surer and clearer. The fact probably is that we here trench upon ground which the moral philosophers have never yet properly broken for us. They have never yet taken sufficient notice of the distinction between earnest moral endeavour and satisfying moral attainment, between the desire to do the right and the ability to do it, between the love of goodness and its secure possession. And what seems true is that the assurance of faith is in the first place dependent not upon any kind of achievement in the moral sphere but upon earnestness of moral desire. To every man in whose heart there is a truthful and sincere longing after holiness the vision of God will in some measure come, however wide may seem to be the gulf that separates him from the object of his longing. It will be remembered how Jesus Christ again and again described the moral attitude which was necessary for *entrance* into the Kingdom of God as *childlikeness*. "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."[1] Not good deeds are here required; for the Kingdom is God's gift to sinners, rather than his reward to the righteous; and it is only out of the grace thus received that good deeds can ever grow. Not good deeds; but a humble, childlike, patient, aspiring heart. In a word, the graces of character in which faith takes its rise are graces not of satisfied achievement but rather of *receptiveness;* and faith, when it comes, comes not as a thing accomplished but as a thing found—not as a meritorious performance on our part but as a gift on God's part.[2] There is no recent writer by whom the two sides of the truth have been better held together than by Herrmann in his complementary conceptions of 'moral earnestness as the way to religion' and of 'the Christian

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[1] I John 2 : 10.

[2] Heb. 12 : 14.

[3] Heb. 11 : 6. It is interesting to note that these two sayings occur in successive chapters of the same New Testament book.

[1] Mark 10 : 15.

[2] See below, p. 463

faith as the power to accomplish that which is good.'[1] It is just because faith comes to us when we are in the way of duty that it gives us power to do our duty. It is just because it is granted with direct relevance to our moral need that it so well meets that need. In each advance we make towards holiness there lies the promise of a firmer and clearer grasp of the Unseen Reality, and in this better hold upon God there lies in its turn the promise of a holiness yet more advanced. "The knowledge of the Christian faith," says Pascal, "excites the love of charity and works through it; which charity immediately gives rise to a new light of knowledge, and that knowledge provokes a flame of love, which in turn engenders a light; and in this way by a continual rivalry of give-and-take, flame and light exciting and engendering one another, the Christian soul is led to the fulness of light, which is to say the fulness of charity and of truth."[2]

The fact is that, however far away we may seem to be from a finally satisfactory analysis of this region of our experience, we have in the end but two main alternatives to choose from—the view which makes faith's birth and growth in the soul depend on moral earnestness and depth, and the view which makes them depend on intellectual capacity and attainment. Either we must believe that the assurance of God is granted to those who are in the way of duty (and with intent to enable them to follow it), or we must believe that it is granted to the well-informed and sharp-witted (and with intent to satisfy their curiosity). And surely we cannot be in any doubt as to which of these alternatives we must at any price reject. Can we, at any price, suffer the thought that God reveals Himself only to the man of science and that the rest of us are dependent on *him* for our certainty of God's being and God's love?

> "And must I wait till science give
> All doubts a full reply?"[3]

Shall we not rather cry with Frederick Robertson: "See the beauty of this Divine arrangement! If the certainty of truth depended upon the proof of miracles, prophecy, or the discoveries of science, then Truth would be in the reach of those chiefly who can weigh evidence, investigate history and languages, study by experiment; whereas as it is, 'The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way.' "[1]

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[1] *Cf., e. g.*, the two sections in the *Ethik*, entitled respectively "Der Weg zur Religion" and "Der christliche Glaube als Kraft, das Gute zu tun": or, for English-speaking students, the two sections in his *Systematic Theology* (Eng. transl., 1927) entitled respectively "The Way to Religion" and "The Overcoming of Sin through Faith which is God's Gift."

[2] Quoted by E. Droz, *Le Scepticisme de Pascal*, p. 107.

[3] Principal J. C. Shairp.

Indeed we seem to be justified in putting the matter in another and even more emphatic way. We can say that (whatever further and fuller connotation we may afterwards be able to add) *God must at least be the name for some reality that is revealed characteristically to the seeker after righteousness, and faith must be the name for some assurance that naturally and properly accompanies a life of obedient service.* To the man who follows faithfully such light as he possesses there must in the end come all the light he needs. And perhaps one reason why true and faithful seekers have sometimes seemed to be left so long in darkness is that they have been looking for the wrong thing and so have not at first recognised God, when indeed He revealed Himself to them. They have been looking for something too external, too like a scientific demonstration, too different in texture from the imperative certainty of duty itself. They have been clinging, like Robertson, to the single article of belief that "It must be right to do right,"[2] and for a long time they have not realised how much that really meant, and how near it came to being everything. And then at last, when light has come, it has come in the form of the realisation, described in the *First Epistle of John*, that although "no man hath seen God at any time," yet "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."[3]

The Meaning of the Distinction
Between Faith and Knowledge

VII

How then in the light of these conclusions are we to say that faith—the religious avenue to truth—differs from scientific 'knowledge'? Perhaps the answer cannot be better given than in the words of Kant: "The former concludes that something is because something ought to take place; the latter concludes that something is because something does take place."[1] There is thus always, from the point of view of science, a certain indirectness in faith's procedure. Instead of arguing, as science does, from *data*, it argues from *agenda*. In seeking to determine the meaning of the world it does not start from the knowledge of the world which is given to us in sense-perception and build upon that foundation, inference by inference, until the desired conclusion is reached. It attains the summit not by a gradual climbing up from below but at a single leap from the neighbouring peak of duty. A good example would be the different ways in which religion on the one hand and a number of scientists on the other have tried to reach the assurance of immortality. Science has begun from the pineal gland, from the supposedly apparent indestructibility of soul-stuff, or from table-rappings which seem to be of mysterious origin; and has laboured to erect a flawless deductive edifice upon one or other of these foundations. But religion has been frankly agnostic of all such matters as these. It has not hoped to reach Heaven by any Jacob's ladder set upon the natural world, but has based its confidence rather upon the meaning of love:

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[1] In the discourse referred to, p. 103.

[2] See Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 303; *cf.* also a fine letter of Robertson's in his *Life and Letters*, vol. I, pp. 111 f.

[3] I John 4 : 12.

> "If then you ask me how I know
> We shall not wholly die,
> I answer that that love of yours
> Is of too fine a sky."[2]

And it has trusted the God Whom love reveals to us:

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."[3]

Hence it is that those truths which science reaches last of all, or rather never *quite* reaches, religion begins with and makes the foundation of that further and more detailed knowledge concerning which (being further from its source) it never feels quite the same degree of assurance, though it is just here that science would be more at home.

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[1] *Werke*, Hartenstein, vol. III, pp. 531–532.

[2] A. J. Young, *The Death of Eli and Other Poems*, p. 10.

[3] Whittier, "I bow my forehead in the dust."

The guiding principle of scientific inference is, of course, the law of causation. The corresponding guiding principle in the ethical sphere is that of a purpose for good. Hence the difference between natural-scientific knowledge and religious faith may also be stated by saying that the former envisages reality as a system of causes and effects, and hopes by that means to reach the truth concerning it, whereas the latter envisages it as guided by a purpose for good and puts its reliance upon the aspects of its nature that are thus revealed. By none of Kant's followers has this distinction been more clearly drawn than by Herrmann (in his book entitled *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*). He says:

> "Metaphysics seeks to represent the world of scientific nature-knowledge as a unity. . . . The interest of religion, on the other hand, is not concerned with representing the factually given existence of the world as an organic and comprehensible unity. It is true that religion, no less than science, views the world as a Whole, but the religious view of the World-whole does not serve to determine how the parts thereof cohere together in accordance with discoverable laws. . . . What we have to do with in religion is much rather an attempt to view the multiplicity of things as the ordered Whole of means by which is realised the felt Highest Value of the religious man."[1]

The same distinction has sometimes been expressed by saying that the cosmic unity which natural science is always striving to reach is an *aggregative* unity, whereas that to which we are introduced in religious faith is a *selective* unity. And if it be asked on what basis we make our selection, and what right we have to give higher rank to some facts than we do to others, we can only answer that we have no right save the right, which is also a duty, of loyalty to our values and of faith in their inexhaustible meaning. As has been concluded by a writer who has in this matter followed Kant's lead to very significant results: "The selective character of religion, which we found it so hard to justify while arguing from the purely intellectual standpoint, falls into place and is seen to be both natural and inevitable when we recognise the 'Primacy of the Practical Reason' of man."[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 84–85. "The intellectual interest," says Höffding very similarly, "prompts us to conceive experience as a great immeasurable system of causal groups and causal series; the religious interest moves us to a conception of being as the home of the development and conservation of value." *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 93.

Faith not a Probable Hypothesis to afterwards Verified But an Everdeepening Person trus

VIII

There is, however, a further question which is here likely to suggest itself and to which some answer must be attempted before we pass on to other topics. How, it will be asked, does faith compare with scientific knowledge in respect of the degree of certainty, or of subjective assurance, which it carries with it? Is it possible that faith should ever succeed in putting the reality of God's providence or the continuance of human personality after death on the same plane of certainty, and so almost completely beyond the reach of doubt, as natural science has succeeded in putting, let us say, the Copernican theory of the heavens or the biological doctrine of evolution?

There are few questions connected with the theory of religion to which so many wrong answers have been given as have been given to this one. Where then has the trap lain? It has lain, we believe, precisely in the failure to realise that our religious beliefs differ from our scientific theories not so much in degree of certitude as in kind of certitude. It is indeed not difficult to see that our certainty of God, even when considered in its most triumphant form, altogether lacks that blandly impersonal and matter-of-fact air that characterises our established scientific results. It can lay little claim either to that secure rigidity or to that easy communicability which the other possesses. We never feel able to boast about the verities of our religion that they are "as plain as a pike-staff" or that they "*crevent les yeux.*" No, faith's assurance is too intimately personal a thing for any such phrases to apply to it, too much dependent upon what is inward and elusive, too closely bound up with certain times and seasons of special discernment. So to the very end faith includes (as indeed the word itself very plainly imports) a real measure of active and adventurous trust in something which is very far from being a stark and staring fact and which it is, except when our active nature is widest awake, only too easy to doubt. To believe what the Christian Gospel announces—that this rough-and-tumble world of ours is under the control of Almighty Love—will always require the strenuous and sustained effort of the undivided spirit. At the same time it would be a complete misreading of the facts to mistake this difference in kind of assurance for a lesser degree of it. It is true that since Bishop Butler first started the fashion, theologians have again and again seen fit to toy with the idea that in religion we must be content with some form of *probability;* and yet no conclusion could more fatally miss the mark. "It is quite preposterous," as Kant rightly saw, "to apply the term probability in this connection (*Die Ausdruck der Wahrscheinlichkeit ist in dieser Anwendung völlig ungereimt*)."[1] For, as Kant goes on to explain, probability is a term applied to scientific hypotheses when more than 50 per cent of the known facts appear to be in their favour. No conception, therefore, could be more completely bound up with the impersonal scientific outlook, or with the disinterested and impartial weighing of evidence, than is this one. Indeed if there is any walk of life in which probability may properly be our guide, it is science itself and not religion. It might be argued with a good deal of force that the most we can ever hope for in science is a high degree of probability. And as regards subjective assurance, too much of it is by no means a good thing in the scientist. On the contrary it would seem to be precisely the best scientists who are accustomed to hold even their securest results with some reserve of doubt and caution. Nor is there any scientific formula on whose correctness we should be willing to stake our lives and the fate of all we hold most dear. But with religion it is different. Here the authentic note, the note of the expert, is not one of caution, or of reserved judgment, but one of passionate conviction and of simple, childlike, self-surrendering trust. It was for something more than a probability that the martyrs died and the crusaders fought. It was for something more than a probability that Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. It was something more than a probability that guided St. Paul on his missionary journeyings and that has made the Christian history of the lands to which he came. It was, in fact, certainty of a peculiarly serene and indefeasible order, though at the same time making the severest demands upon the active powers of the spirit.[1]

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[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Ethical Approach to Theism* (1913), pp. 47–48. The distinction between the aggregative and the selective (or teleological) methods of constructing reality is admirably worked out by Dr. Barbour. I may quote also from Prof. Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, p. 330: "A teleological view of the universe means the belief that reality is a significant whole. When teleology in this sense is opposed to a purely mechanical theory, it means substantially the assertion of an intelligible whole as against the idea of reality as a mere aggregate or collocation of independent facts."

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[1] *Werke*, ed. Cassirer, VIII, p. 283.

Yet how, it will be asked, can this really be? How can our hold upon that which needs active effort to believe, and which we trust in rather than know, be surer than our hold upon the demonstrative and empirically verified results of science?

The answer lies in reminding ourselves once again that in religion we are, as it were, much closer to our ultimate values and standards than we are in science. We are dealing here directly with the things that we know to matter most—with justice and honour, with character and the will to serve. And however uncertain our hold upon the divine significance of these things may sometimes seem to be, yet when it *is* within our grasp we recognise it to be the only quite authentic certainty there is. It is as if we were always just glimpsing something which even a glimpse sufficiently proclaims to be either the one ultimate reality or else the purest nothingness; and if, in our rarer hours, and growingly in the course of a maturing experience of life, we attain a clear enough vision of it to make us very gloriously confident that it is indeed the most real of all things, yet we never (as the scholastic doctors fondly hoped) quite reach such a knowledge of it as to confound the atheist and prove him dunce. "It is not so much," says Clutton-Brock, "that we are sure of our values as that they are sure."[2] In the realm of science, and especially of our knowledge of nature, we may sometimes attain to what are apparently irrefragable demonstrations, but we are always working at more or less of a distance from anything like the bed-rock of our human certainty. In the realm of religious belief, on the other hand, though our grasp of it is not sufficient (or not of a kind) to yield demonstrative knowledge, yet it is the very Absolute itself that we are all the time reaching after, and such knowledge as we have is knowledge of the Eternal.

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[1] It has pleased me to find in one of the last utterances of James Ward an almost verbal identity of teaching: "What is here meant by faith is not that our reflections have brought us to entertain the existence of God as a more or less probable hypothesis with which, as Laplace maintained, science can dispense. This faith is not an opinion (δόξα) which meanwhile may eke out a gap in our knowledge that is still awaiting verification. It is rather a certain trustfulness (πίστις). . . ." *Contemporary British Philosophy*, 2nd series, p. 53.

[2] *Studies in Christianity*, p. 40.

Such a statement of the matter may be very far from finally satisfying the requirements of psychological analysis at this point, and to some it may seem to be little better than wilful obscurantism and a casting of dust in our own eyes. Yet here again we have the very strong feeling that the distinction we are attempting to draw, however seemingly difficult, is somehow in the facts themselves and is not merely of our own making. The higher any object of knowledge is in the scale of being and of worth, and the more closely it touches the foundations of our lives, the less possible does it seem, as it were, to land it on the *terra firma* of obvious and demonstrable fact, and the more does there enter into our grasp of it something that must be called faith. And when we come to deal, as here, with the very apex of all Being, with the foundation of all that counts for us as giving value to our lives, with the 'master light of all our seeing,' then this faith appears to become less and less an affair of the intellect alone, and more and more an affair of the whole personality, and to be, in fact, a kind of *trust*. It is no longer a matter merely of giving assent to the truth of propositions; it is a matter of placing honourable reliance in a Reality which claims our loyalty.

Here then we come upon the crux of the whole matter: *the certitude of science differs from the certitude of religion in that the former proceeds primarily from the intellect but the latter from the personality as a whole.* Nothing, in fact, could be clearer than that the "saving faith" of which the traditional theology discoursed was never conceived of as a purely intellectual quantity. It is quite true that rationalism has, during more than one heyday of its influence, almost succeeded in making such saving faith appear identical with the intellectual acceptance of doctrinal formulas. But, first, not even rationalism has ever been able entirely to obscure the fact that the will has some part to play in the matter also; and secondly, when we push our enquiries backward to the days when rationalism was not, the part played by the will becomes abundantly plain. In the Christianity of St. Paul there is no doubt already present some trace of admixture with Greek (and more particularly, with Stoic) rationalism; so that when we read (as in the sixteenth chapter of *The Acts of the Apostles*), "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," we are in great doubt as to whether this 'belief' is intended to mean (1) credence in the historical facts of His life, death, and especially of His resurrection, or (2) acceptance of some transcendent view about His Person—His Messiahship or Godhead, or (3) a personal trust in Him, like to the trust that His Galilean disciples had in Him in the days of His flesh. The fact is that it means all three, but that the last-mentioned meaning is the most deep-seated and the most inclusive.[1] And when we take one step back from St. Paul to the teaching of Jesus Himself, all doubt disappears. No word seems to have been oftener in our Lord's mouth than this word 'faith,' yet it is as plain as possible that for Him its primary meaning was not *credence* but rather *reliance*. What Jesus meant by faith in God was the willingness to cast oneself without fear upon His love. When He required such faith of His followers, His appeal was never merely to their perspicacity or to their power of understanding, but rather to their loyalty. Of course it is true that in such reliance an element of credence is explicitly or implicitly contained. We cannot put our trust in a God whom we do not believe to exist and to be worthy of the confidence we place in Him. But the point to be grasped is that this credence grows out of the reliance rather than is its sole source. The psychological order of events is not that we first, by purely intellectual paths of discovery, reach the certainty of God's existence and worthiness to be trusted, and then put our trust in Him and live our lives accordingly. Rather is it that out of a certain kind of living, and a certain attentiveness to the deeper significance of such living, there grows up in our hearts a loyal and steadfast trust in that Reality within which our lives are set, and then we see that within such trust is latently and germinally contained an acceptance of the propositions (let us say) that God exists and that He is good. To the great Greek tradition in our Western theology we entirely owe our present ability to draw forth this latent element of intellectual credence into the full daylight of explicit consciousness; but where that tradition very seriously erred, and led to rationalism, was in the tendency it showed from the first to become so preoccupied with the intellectual implications as to lose sight of their practical roots. We have here done our best to make good this defect and, while bringing the intellectual implications of faith into the clearest possible focus, to remember that in their origin they are more than merely intellectual and are, in fact, moral, having their real *fons et origo* in the active powers of character and personality. The faith which is religion is not in itself an assent to propositions but is, in words of Herrmann's, "nothing else than trust in persons and in the powers of personal life."[1]

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[1] Worth reading is W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1917).

Closely allied to the utterly false view that faith has to do with probability is the prevailing tendency to speak of it as an *hypothesis*. Support for this tendency may be found in many of the best contemporary writers,[2] yet it cannot be regarded as other than seriously misleading. Faith may indeed be described as a choice between two *alternatives*, but to describe it as a "choice of the nobler *hypothesis*" is to suggest a false parallel with what is known to experimental science by that name. And in particular it is to raise, in a way that is surely confusing, the issue of *verification*. It is sometimes said that the hypothesis of faith, which in its beginning is but the drawing of a bow at a venture, is afterwards progressively and experimentally verified in the course of prolonged religious experience.[3]

Yet in what sense is it true that we are ever able, in this life of ours, to verify our religious beliefs? We do, or ought to, become surer of them as the days go by, as our experience grows in depth and breadth; and we may justly hope that in the days to come they may become still more firmly established in our minds and spirits. But the process whereby they thus become strengthened and secured is in no way different from that whereby they were first suggested. What happens is only that our discernment becomes surer, not that it is superseded by the discovery of evidence of a directer kind. In religion it is never given to us to turn our eyes upon the object of our belief, as Adams and Leverrier turned theirs upon the Neptune they had already guessed to be there, in such a way as to silence all doubts and all objections forever. "I only know," wrote James Martineau at the extreme end of a long life of faith, "that duty and love look more divine, and the spiritual life more immortal, than when I spoke of them with less experience."[1] And that is all that is ever given to us to know. To the very end the facts of life remain capable, from a strictly theoretical point of view, of two opposite interpretations. The man of faith is more and more enabled to see in them the wise dispensation of a God Who makes all things work together for good, but the very facts that impress him as most notably showing forth the loving discipline of a Heavenly Father may easily enough appear to the unbeliever to point to a directly opposite conclusion.[2] It is true that the apologists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were in the habit of endeavouring to clinch matters in favour of Christianity by appealing to the 'miracles' embedded in its sacred writ; but nowadays the presence of these incidents in the records is more commonly felt as an obstacle than as an aid to nascent belief; so that Rousseau could cry in 1763: "Ôtez les miracles de l'Évangile, et toute la terre est aux pieds de Jésus-Christ."[3] We have learned that it is only to a faith already firmly established that such miracles really become credible, and that "every experience of miracle presupposes faith"[4] rather than is presupposed by it. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."[5] Thus faith is never superseded in our earthly life. "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror."[6]

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[1] *Communion with God*, Eng. transl., p. 228.

[2] *Cf., e. g.*, W. R. Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, 1st series, p. 169; Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Inquires*, pp. 80, 193; Edwyn Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, pp. 177 ff.

[3] *Cf., e. g.*, B. H. Streeter in *Concerning Prayer*, p. 7.

And indeed to faith's own eye this very fact, far from remaining a ground of bitterness or of despair, comes sooner or later to appear as a characteristic and very gracious factor of the divine discipline. Is it not a good and salutary thing that there should thus be room in our lives for loyal trust? Is this not after all a better training for our spirits than if God had given us a sign, quite palpable and matter-of-fact, which he who runs might read? Should we not be buying very dearly the delight of shutting the sceptic's mouth and calling dunce to the atheist, if we bought it at a price which put faith altogether out of work and made the soul's voyagings as safe and unadventurous as if it had stayed at home? There has always been in mankind's religious quest, as there was to Browning's Paracelsus,

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[1] See Pringle-Pattison's essay on Martineau in *The Philosophical Radicals*, p. 82.

[2] Speaking of the Hebrew prophets, Bishop Gore says: "It is also plain that their dominant conviction that God governs the world in justice cannot be what we should call a deduction from experience—the experience of Israel as a nation or of the individual. . . . Certainly their doctrine of God's justice, though in part it can appeal to experiences, does not vary with their experiences and is not based upon them. It is a conviction established in their souls by what they believed to be the voice of God bearing witness concerning Himself."—*Belief in God*, Amer. ed., pp. 98–99.

[3] *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, part I, letter III.

[4] Ritschl, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Swing's translation, p. 189, note.

[5] Luke 16 : 31.

[6] I Cor. 13 : 12. Moffatt's translation.

> ". . . just so much of doubt
> As bade me plant a surer foot upon
> The sun-road . . ."

The note of it runs through all the religions of the world as a haunting minor strain, plaintive enough at times, but on the whole contributing to their human sincerity and ethical depth, and making them (as we cannot but believe) a sweeter music in the ears of the Most High. So it must always be on earth. One day, perhaps, we shall know even as we are known. But now we know in part only, and now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. And the only thing in the world that is greater and more beautiful than faith and hope is the love from which they spring.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

The Historical Beginnings of Beli
in Go

I

We must now concern ourselves with the place occupied by the conception of God in the religious outlook. Hitherto we have been for the most part content to describe the object of religious belief, in the most general and non-committal way possible, as an ‘order’ or, at most, as a ‘power’ that makes for the maintenance of value. But it is now high time to raise the further question whether such an order or power can be conceived impersonally or whether it inevitably carries with it the thought of a supreme Soul which is its source.

If we consult the history of religions, we shall find this question answered with a very impressive unanimity. There is little or no doubt in the world's mind on this vital issue. No matter what part of the map we turn to, we shall discover that man has apparently found it impossible in the long run to conceive of the real order as being “a well of value without limit” and a true home for his spirit except by supposing it to be under the control of a spiritual Being or Beings. The testimony of historical religion as a whole would be truly expressed by saying that an impersonal or non-spiritual moral order must be regarded as a contradiction in terms, and that, even if it were conceivable, it would not properly satisfy the religious need of man.

When, however, we claim that historical religion points in no uncertain way to the necessity of the conception of God for the maintenance of a religious outlook, we must not be taken as meaning that this conception was fully present in religion from the very beginning. In studying any evolutionary process such as that with which we have here to do, it is important that we should determine not merely what elements have persisted in it unchanged from its beginning to its end but also what direction its development has followed and to what final consummation it seems to lead up. What we are here claiming is only that belief in God is apparently an essential part of every religion that has reached a certain stage—and that a very early stage—in its development. Whether the same thing can be affirmed of the most rudimentary forms of religion with which we have any kind of acquaintance is a question by itself, and one to which we must first devote some separate attention, though we do so with a keen sense of the obscurity of the region which we are here for a moment entering.

A generation ago this question too would have been answered unhesitatingly in the affirmative; for it was then the almost unanimous opinion of anthropologists that belief in the existence of superhuman spirits is nothing less than the original seed out of which all later religion has evolved. It was held that the mind of primitive man was entirely dominated by the animistic tendency, *i. e.*, the tendency to refer all that happens, even in external nature, to the agency of spirits. Of recent years, however (as we have already had occasion to note[1]), the primitive nature of this tendency has been widely called in question. To begin with, certain weighty considerations have been brought forward to indicate the presence of something like a 'preanimistic' stage in the development of human mentality. It has been suggested by Mr. Marett that animism proper was preceded by what would more correctly be called *animatism*, and this suggestion has been taken up by many other writers, including M. Durkheim. The distinction here hinted at is between the idea that there are personally conceived spirits behind nature and the simpler and (as it would seem) more primitive idea that nature is itself alive. Before men began to say that there was a spirit in the stone, they said that the stone was a living thing; or, as the distinction has been translated by German writers, they said it was *belebt* before they began to say it was *beseelt*.[2] Moreover, these writers claim that what was important for religion was neither that things were alive—"there is obviously," says Mr. Marett, "nothing in the least supernatural in being merely alive"[1]—nor that they had a soul, for that also would not of itself give them any religious standing; but rather the kind of life or soul they had. Since we have repeatedly had occasion to emphasise the fact that there is nothing to arouse religious feeling in the mere thought of living beings whose power is greater than man's, we need not further dwell upon it now. But it is at least worthy of note that recent inquiries into the life of certain very primitive tribes, and most notably of the native tribes of Central Australia, have brought to light the fact that these tribesmen, while believing in the existence of spirits and professing themselves to be aware of their location, yet do not in any way associate or connect them with their religious observances. Here then we seem to have religion and animism existing side by side but not yet related to one another; making it more difficult than ever for us to regard the belief in spiritual existences as containing in itself the real root of the religious consciousness.

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[1] See above, pp. 187 f.

[2] "Nur mit Vorsicht sind aus der Kinderpsychologie Schlüsse auf das primitive Denken zu ziehen. Aber wenn ein Kind morgens die Blumen und Erbsen im Garten begrüsst: 'Guten Morgen, habt ihr gut geschlafen?' . . . so bietet eine solche Denkweise zum primitiven Denken schlagende Parallelen. Alles wird als lebendig aufgefasst."—Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 11.

Where then, among the beliefs of these primitive peoples, is that root to be found? Contemporary authorities are largely in agreement in holding that it is to be found in the conception of *mana*. *Mana* is a Melanesian word very widely in use among the islanders of the Pacific, and signifying supernatural power, force, or influence. A warrior may have *mana* and be victorious thereby, or his battle-axe may have it and so put power in his hands. There may be *mana* in a tree, in a fetich, in a song. Words closely equivalent in meaning are to be found in the languages of almost all primitive peoples; the Central Australian tribes say *churinga*, the Malays say *pemali*, the Sioux Indians say *wakanda*, the Iroquois say *orenda*, the Algonquins say *manitou*, and so forth; and in each case the word seems to occupy the same central position. Of the earliest known form of religion we accordingly find M. Durkheim saying:

> "We are now in a better position to understand why it has been impossible to define religion by the idea of mythical personalities, gods or spirits; it is because this way of representing religious things is in no way inherent in their nature. What we find at the origin and basis of religious thought are not determined and distinct objects and beings pos-

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[1] Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, 2nd ed., p. 117.

sessing a sacred character of themselves; they are indefinite powers, anonymous forces . . . whose impersonality is strictly comparable to that of the physical forces whose manifestations the sciences of nature study."[1]

Without committing ourselves to the rest of what M. Durkheim says in this context, or even to all his language in this passage, we may accept his main contention that it is possible to penetrate backward to a rudimentary form of religion in which the Power whose aid the ritual invokes has not yet come to be conceived of as a spiritual being.

Nevertheless, this important fact having been noticed, our next observation must be that this order of things does not long prevail. Indeed the very next step that human religion seems everywhere to take is precisely the appropriation of the animistic tendency to its own use. The thought of *mana* comes to be closely associated with belief in spirits, and so gods come into being. So far as the present state of research is able to inform us, *mankind's earliest gods are spirits who are conceived as possessing, and being the sources of,* mana, *and who for that reason come to be venerated and to have a place in religious ceremonials.* M. Durkheim's admission of this fact is on the whole rather grudging, so that it is difficult to escape the impression that he is allowing his own militant antispiritualism to prejudice his historical judgment. He writes:

> "In this work of elaboration, the idea of the soul has undoubtedly played an important part: it is through it that the idea of personality has been introduced into the domain of religion. But it is not true that, as the theorists of animism maintain, it contains the germ of the whole religion. First of all, it presupposes the notion of *mana* or the totemic principle of which it is only a special form. . . . The idea of the soul has merely served to direct the mythological imagination in a new way and to suggest to it constructions of a new sort. But the matter for these conceptions has been taken, not from the representation of the soul but from the reservoir of the anonymous and diffused forces which constitute the original foundation of religion. The creation of mythical personalities has only been another way of thinking of these essential forces."[2]

That the germ of primitive religion is to be looked for not in the belief in spirits but in the conception of a supernatural potency that may be called to man's aid—so much we have already sufficiently insisted upon. The *mana*-theory of the origin of religion is, indeed, superior to the animistic theory precisely because the notion of *value*, on which we have been led to place so much weight, is implicitly present in the idea of *mana*, while it is absent from the mere idea of a soul as such.[1] But where we feel bound to disagree with M. Durkheim is in his undisguised implication that it was by an historical accident (and an untoward accident at that) that human piety ever came to be associated with the spiritualistic outlook at all. The truth seems to be, on the contrary, that religion has everywhere seized the earliest possible opportunity of becoming spiritualistic, and has become more and more purely spiritualistic as time has gone by. At a very early stage in the religious development of all the higher cultures, *mana* apparently came to be interpreted in definitely psychic terms, and there is no forward step in the history of world-religion that is now more firmly consolidated than this one. Once the notion of the soul is developed and the belief in spiritual existences established, *mana* cannot in the long run be kept dissociated from them. The association may be, as the evidence from Central Australia seems to show, somewhat tardy in accomplishing itself, but in the end its accomplishment is inevitable. For before long man comes to see that the powers he has been in the habit of ascribing to *mana* are powers which only a *soul* can possess.[2]

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[1] *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Eng. transl., p. 200.
[2] *Op. cit.,* Eng. transl., p. 295.

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[1] "According to a fully developed Animism," says Söderblom, "everything has a soul. But it does not in any way follow from this that everything is extraordinary, dangerous, worthy of reverence, and magically or religiously potent. On the one hand there stands a multitude of psychic beings; on the other hand, and separate from all that is commonplace, there stands the Holy. We might say that *we have to do in the one case with an explanation, in the other with a valuation*. Animism regards everything as a living being or as an object furnished with a soul. *Mana*-belief attributes special significance to a limited number of objects. The difference reveals itself most clearly in the fact that the conception of the soul does not necessarily produce any ritual, whereas *mana-tabu* is in its very essence that which demands a special mode of behaviour and is surrounded with important commands and prohibitions." (*Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 105.) Or again: "The soul-theory tells us *what* something is, it explains appearances by means of an indwelling or free-wandering agent. *Mana*, on the other hand, expresses a particular psychical reaction, *a kind of valuation*, which gradually raises certain select beings, objects, and actions out of the usual relations of life and creates an atmosphere which is saturated with the strong and dangerous air of religion." (P. 190.) Most of the italics are my own.

[2] For a thoroughgoing inquiry into the primitive relations of *mana* and spirit, see Söderblom, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–88. Söderblom's is on the whole the soundest book we possess on this entire subject.

What are we to say [illegible] of humanism and Jainism — 'Higher' Religions

II

There is, however, one apparent exception to the universality of belief in God among the higher religions of the world. As is well known, gods have no place in 'original' Buddhism as first preached by Gautama. This phenomenon of an advanced religion without a Deity is so perplexing to the student of human religion as a whole that a large number of authorities go so far as to deny that 'original' Buddhism is properly to be called a religion at all.[1] What Gautama taught, they say, was not a religion, but an essentially non-religious philosophy of life which in itself was largely of an academic nature and unsuited to become the foundation of a wide national movement. There is not a little to be said in support of this view. To begin with, it is certainly true that Gautama did not intend to found a new religion. What he did was to establish within the general framework of Brahmanistic civilisation and religion a new order of mendicant monks. The purpose of the order was the salvation of the individual's own soul by the individual's own efforts. Self-sufficiency was the key-note of the new teaching, and hence no help was to be looked for from divine beings. Gautama did not deny the existence of the gods of Brahmanism, but he taught that man could not really solve his life-problem by worshipping them, and so he discouraged his disciples from indulging in the practice of prayer or ritual. The gods, indeed, seemed to him to be faced with the same need of salvation that men are faced with, and he would recommend to them also the way of salvation he had discovered. That way consisted in betaking oneself to three "places of refuge from the chain of causation," the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—the Master, the doctrine, and the monastic rule. Such was the outlook of original or 'Hinayana' Buddhism. But it is to be noted that this was not the Buddhism which swept so victoriously over Eastern Asia, and which we meet in all these lands to-day. Those who are expert in this region of learning tell us that the pure self-sufficiency of Gautama's own outlook began almost immediately, within the order founded by him, to be modified in the direction of some dependence upon Divine aid. And the Buddhism which has been a power in later history, and which is potent in the world to-day, is 'Mahayana' Buddhism, which has gods galore. Not only have the old gods been largely reinstated, but Buddha himself and the many Buddhas have become objects of worship. Here is a convenient summary from a standard text-book:

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[1] *Cf.*, *e. g.*, Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, vol. I, p. 128, vol. II, p. 101; Menzies, *History of Religions*, p. 379.

> "Of the multitude of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas which are known to every variety of Buddhism, a large number have come, in Mahayana, to be regarded as genuine deities. This is especially true of the five spiritual Buddhas 'of meditation and contemplation,' the Dhyani-buddhas, and the sons born from them by emanation, the Dhyani-bodhisattvas. It is further taught that every Buddha which appears in the world of men has his heavenly, divine Original, his Dhyani-buddha together with its Dhyani-bodhisattva. Thus the Dhyani-buddha of the historical Gautama Buddha is called Amitabha. And his Dhyani-bodhisattva is still more important and well-known under the name of Avalokitesvara . . . *i. e.*, 'he who graciously looketh down upon men.' This is the most popular deity of Mahayana, and is called upon, and gives his help, in every time of need, when all hope fails. . . . He is the national god of Tibet. In China, owing to his kind-heartedness, he has become a woman and appears as the goddess of happiness, Kwanyin—in Japanese, Kwannon—in pictures that resemble the Madonna with the Child. Furthermore, all Buddhas, including the Dhyani-Buddhas, are brought together as revelatory forms or emanations of the one eternal God, Adibuddha—the Prime Buddha. To all these divine beings, which Mahayana has assimilated from the popular religion, and to which are added also female figures like the goddess Tara . . . pious worship and devotion are directed. Buddhism is in its own nature self-redemption: the Buddhist himself wins the battle and has no god to thank for anything at all. He wins it through knowledge and renunciation. But now a revolution takes place. *Bhakti*, faith, devotion make entry into Mahayana. Buddha is to be loved and worshipped. . . . In place of self-redemption there appears the self-surrender of the utterly helpless soul to a God."[1]

Buddhism as we now know it, therefore, so far from being godless, seems to be only too well supplied with deities; and it may very reasonably be argued that, unless this development had taken place, Buddhism could never have become a widely accepted national religion. And with hardly less justice it may be affirmed that not until this development began was it a religion in the proper sense at all. For it is to be noted that we have here to do not with a faith and a worship that are directed towards some kind of impersonal Divine Reality but with a philosophy of life from which, logically enough, faith and worship are as notably absent as are personal deities. The Hinayana Buddhist puts no trust in the real order of things and refuses to believe that even in the last resort that order is in any wise good; and thus his doctrine is difficult, from any point of view, to embrace within the view of the essence of religion which we have defended in this work. We need not, perhaps, commit ourselves to the dogmatic statement that the teaching of Gautama is in no sense to be regarded as religious in character. But we can claim that in endeavouring to dispense with faith in God and with the sense of dependence upon Him it was departing from the universally established traditions of human religion in a way the unstable eccentricity of which finds an eloquent commentary in its own later history. "The religious significance of Buddhism," Dr. Estlin Carpenter has said, "lies in the fact that a scheme of thought which began by rejecting all ontological ideas found it necessary to admit them."[1] If once, in mankind's story, a great popular leader made bold to propose a way of salvation in which God played no part, his followers were quick to make good so glaring an omission. And as for the point which we are in this chapter more immediately concerned to establish—that reality cannot be conceived as a value-conserving order unless it be under spiritual control, the case of Buddhism tends rather to confirm than to destroy such a contention. For it was precisely because Gautama was without faith in the ultimate goodness of reality that he felt no need to introduce into his teaching the thought of God.

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[1] Tiele-Söderblom, *Kompendium der Religionsgeschichte*, 5 Aufl., pp. 263–264.

What has been said of Buddhism seems to apply also to the religion of the Jains. Jainism was founded by an older contemporary of Gautama called Mahavira, and is therefore the elder of the two movements by one generation; but it has never attracted a large body of followers. Like Buddhism it was originally intended merely as a reform, and the aim of Mahavira, like that of Gautama, was to set up a new monastic order within the general boundaries of the Hindu religion. Like Buddhism its original endeavour was to dispense with the help of the gods and to foster the spirit of self-sufficiency by crying: "Man! Thou art thy own friend! Why wishest thou for a friend beyond thyself?"[1] And like Buddhism its career as a living religion seems to have been directly dependent on the fact that within a few generations of its birth it had made a god of its founder and had admitted many other deities besides.

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[1] *Buddhism and Christianity* (1924), pp. vii–viii. *Cf.* Dr. F. B. Jevons in *Recent Developments in European Thought* (ed. F. S. Marvin), p. 84: "Buddhism is a radiation from the common centre, from the heart of man, though it radiates in a direction very different from that followed by any other religion. The direction is indeed one which, as the history of religion shows, it has been impossible for man long to follow, for, wherever Buddhism has been established, it has relapsed; and the Buddha, who strove to divert men from prayer and from the worship of gods, has himself become a god to whom prayer and worship are addressed."

Generally speaking, the impression made upon us by original Buddhism and original Jainism is that they represent, more than anything else, individual aberrations of a somewhat academic kind within the general and age-long tradition of Hindu religion.

The impossibility of maintaining a Religious outlook (X) without theory

III

It may thus be confidently asserted that our race as a whole has found it impossible to maintain a religious outlook apart from belief in God. Men have been unable to conceive of reality as in any way "continuous with their moral consciousness," or to realise their own ethical oneness with it, except by believing it to be under spiritual control. But now, can we say *why* they have felt that the two things must go together? Can we see reason in their apparent insistence that there cannot be value without spirit, or morality without personality?

Assuredly we can, and that without much difficulty. Indeed the question would for most of us have been an idle one were it not that our modern age has witnessed a number of strangely persistent attempts to find an intermediate halting-place in the conception of a purely impersonal moral order, *i. e.*, in an arrangement of things which should in some way be self-sustaining rather than under the active direction of an intelligent agent. The parent of all such attempts is what Browning, in *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, calls "Fichte's clever cut at God Himself," an account of which was given in an earlier chapter.[2] "There is no ground in reason," said Fichte, "for going beyond the moral world-order and, by means of an inference from effect to cause, assuming further a Particular Being as the cause of this order." To state the matter thus is, however, to introduce unnecessary complication into the question. For the point at issue is not really whether we can or cannot rest content in the conception of a moral order without prying into the 'cause' of it; but rather whether in saying that an order is moral we are not at the same time saying that it is under intelligent control.

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[1] *Gaina Sutras*, book I, lecture III, lesson 3, as translated in the tenth volume of the American edition of *The Sacred Books of the East*.

[2] See above, pp. 278 f.

It is this question which mankind has answered with so impressively unanimous an affirmative. Morality being essentially a function of spirit, a moral order has always, and rightly, been taken without further ado to mean a spiritually directed order. If we have any doubts in the matter, surely we need do no more than again remind ourselves what a moral world-order really means—that is to say, what character we are ascribing to the universe when we affirm it to be, in its ultimate constitution, continuous with our consciousness of the Good. At the very lowest we are ascribing to it the ability to conserve what is valuable. But plainly it cannot conserve what is valuable unless it be alive to the value of it; unless, that is, it be sensitive to differences of value and disvalue. There you have just what matters most to religion—that the balances in which all things are finally weighed should be sensitive to the subtlest moral distinctions, that they should record with infallible discrimination the finest and most inward fruits of spiritual development. If the fund of power "that moves the sun and the other stars" is of such a nature as not to be alive to every tenderest nuance of uprightness and purity in the interior motivation of our conduct, then this is no moral universe and religion is an empty dream. Thus the question is: Can anything less than mind, soul, spirit be thus alive and thus sensitive? And to that there can be only one answer. We might indeed almost say that mentality *means* awareness of value. Sensitiveness to precisely such things as moral distinctions—the power "to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—is what we take to be the main function of mentality in its highest ranges. When I say that the biped *X* possesses mentality, my only evidence for the statement is the discovery that he is sensitive or responsive to certain situations in certain ways; and similarly if we have ground for believing that ultimate reality is sensitive to certain things, we are justified in affirming the presence of mentality here also. It is only to spirit that the beauty of goodness can in any wise be apparent. It is only personality that can appreciate character. If a material or less-than-mental order could be sensitive to the finest fruits of spiritual development, then mind would be without excuse for its existence; for all it does or knows would have been done as well and known as fully without its aid.

There seems no question that this is why religion and spiritualism formed so early an alliance with one another and have ever since made common cause against all attempts to conceive the universe on anything like materialistic lines. Since the question was first raised in its mind, mankind has always felt strongly that there is no hope in the world if there be no God in it; which is to say that naught but doom awaits the things we most care for, unless the ultimate fund of power in the universe be vested in a Moral Intelligence.[1]

We may therefore make bold to state the case in the broadest possible way and say that the most vital needs of religion cannot conceivably be satisfied by anything less than the Living God. It is only with Spirit that our spirits can be one, or that we can have any measure of spiritual communion. Whatever more God may be than a moral personality, He cannot, if our finite personalities are not to be spiritually homeless, be any less. The many attempts that have been made, under stress of a variety of philosophical preconceptions, to conceive of God as a mere 'immanent purposiveness' or an 'eternally valid scheme of logical relations' would, even if they were not for the most part self-stultifying in themselves, one and all come to grief on the fact that they would make personal religion, in any high form of it, impossible. For the historical development of religion has not been in the direction of a more abstract and impersonal conception of deity but rather in the direction of a more living, more approachable, and more intimately knowable God—the God of the Sermon on the Mount, the 'God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

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[1] This is as true of the earliest beginnings of belief in gods as it is of our own faith to-day. As one author, writing of these earliest beginnings, says, "The impulse to give gods personal forms and attributes is the consequence of the desire to conserve desirable human mental and moral qualities. It is possible to think of rain or sunshine as conserved by transcendent material objects. But wisdom, knowledge of the future, bravery, love, pity, and like qualities could only be thought to be conserved by gods who possessed these qualities themselves." (W. K. Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion* (1922), pp. 63–64.)

Here then we have the only true religious argument for the Being of God. Other arguments, as we had occasion to notice at the beginning of our study, have been proposed; but so far as they have not been in the end reducible to this one, they have seemed to labour under the double disadvantage of being too hazardously speculative in character and of bearing little discernible relation to the actual insights which have guided historical religion. This is why men first came to believe in gods, this is why they have always believed in them, this is why we to-day still believe in God, and this is the only good argument we can advance in support of our belief in Him; namely, that in the last resort it is only in a Divinely controlled universe, and indeed in actual personal communion with the Divine, that uprightness and honour and self-denying love, and all the things which really count, can live and grow and find their full fruition and be realised in their deepest meaning.

The Question of Immanence and Transcendence.

IV

One question of major importance remains to be discussed. In what relation are we to conceive God, the supreme and all-directing Spirit of the universe, to stand to our own spirits? Is God just *another person*, distinct from my own self-hood, with Whom I can enter into intercourse in much the same way as I can enter into intercourse with another human being? Or is He rather the Universal Spirit in Whom we all "live and move and have our being," Whose life I feel coursing through me, and of Whom my self-hood, for all its apparent self-containedness, is in some sort a part or a mode? To employ an analogy which Aristotle long ago introduced into the theological classroom, am I related to God as the private soldier in an army is related to the general, or am I related to Him rather as the private soldier is related to the common spirit that welds the army into an organised unity, its *volonté générale,* its *esprit de corps?*

We can do no more in this place than indicate in the most general way the lines along which we must look for an answer to this great question. In attempting to do this, however, we must be particularly careful not to start out from any ready-made philosophical theory. If we are wise, we shall not think of deciding this issue in the light of a world-view already adopted, but rather keep our adoption of any definite world-view in abeyance until this prior issue has been decided by an appeal to the ordinary sources of religious insight and discernment.

If we make such an appeal, we can hardly avoid coming to the conclusion that neither of the suggested alternatives can be embraced to the entire exclusion of the other; we must in some degree embrace *both*. To every true worshipper God is *both* another and greater Person *and* in some sense also the Eternal Spirit that moves, in scant or in satisfying measure, in his own heart. He is *both* the general *and* the *esprit de corps;* and the religious relation will be in danger of breaking down if He be conceived either as merely the one or as merely the other. At the same time it seems almost equally difficult to escape the impression that the former of these two aspects of the Divine is for religion the more important. The otherness of God occupies a more prominent place in the mind of the worshipper than does his identity with Him. This is exactly Aristotle's conclusion, the following being his words:

> "The question must now be raised in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the Good and the Highest Good—whether as something separate and independent, or as its organisation. *In both ways,* as in the case of an army. For the Good in the case of an army is both its organisation and its general, but the latter especially—for the existence of the general does not depend on the organisation, but its organisation does depend on him."[1]

Probably the historical beginnings of this two-sidedness in our conception of God are to be found in the fact that that conception seems, as we have already seen, to have taken its rise in a fusion of two ideas, those of *mana* and of spirit. *Mana* may be taken to represent the element of identity or immanence in the religious relation. It is essentially a pervasive something which indwells in things and which may be transfused and communicated from one thing to another. Animism, on the other hand, may be taken to represent the element of otherness or transcendence. It is the origin both of man's conception of his own personality and of his conception of God as a Person. And if it be true that mankind's first gods were spirits possessed of *mana,* it follows that these were conceived of as personal beings who were nevertheless in some sense immanent in the worshipper.

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[1] *Metaphysica,* 1075a. Contrast (as to the relative importance of the two aspects) F. H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality,* p. 433: "The real presence of God's will in mine, our actual and literal satisfaction in common, must not in any case be denied or impaired. This is a religious truth far more essential than God's 'personality,' and hence that personality must be formulated, no matter how inconsistently, so as to agree with this truth and to support it."

There is no later religion (with the possible exceptions, already dealt with, of 'original' Buddhism and Jainism) in which something of both elements may not be discovered dwelling side by side. At the same time the measure of the relative prominence of the two varies very greatly from one religion to another. Indeed there can be little doubt that this is the *chief* respect in which the several religions which stand at what is roughly one and the same level of cultural development differ from each other. Tiele, who holds that the religious history of our race shows not only different stages but also different 'directions' of development, gives central importance to the great ramification of religion into the *theocratic* and the *theanthropic* types. The former stresses the supremacy and transcendency of God over the world, the latter the unity of God with the world and especially with man. Semitic religion is characteristically theocratic; Aryan religion is characteristically theanthropic. The contrast is worked out by the Dutch scholar in great fulness and with great learning, but here we wish only to hint at the further ray of light which later researches seem to some to have thrown on the historical origins of the distinction which he did so much to bring into prominence. In the theanthropic group of religions the present-day historian is likely to see the *mana*-element in religion taking precedence over the animistic element, whereas in the theocratic group he will see the latter taking precedence over the former. In the conception of *Brahman,* which has been called the watchword of Indian civilization, we may perhaps be said to reach the highest point of the more or less one-sided evolution of the *mana*-conception; while in the Mosiac Yahweh, which occupies an almost similar position in the Semitic development, we have the conception of personal Spirit in its most noteworthy form. "Remarkably enough," writes Archbishop Söderblom, than whom nobody has done better work along this line of inquiry, "Moses received his new and all-transforming certainty of the nature of God under the veil of an animistic God-form."[1]

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[1] *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens,* p. 379.

Yet however wide may be the gulf separating *Brahman* from Yahweh, it is quite clear that the former can no more be said to represent a *purely* immanental conception of God than the latter can be said to represent a *purely* transcendent conception. Tiele is quite clear on this point. "All religions," he tells us, "are necessarily both theanthropic and theocratic" to some extent, and "a religion entirely destitute of one of these elements would not be truly a religion at all." "We therefore only mean that one of the two families develops more in the theocratic, the other more in the theanthropic direction."[1] He adds that the two streams of development become fully confluent in historical Christianity. "While Buddhism has reached the extreme limit in the theanthropic direction . . . and while Islam in its most fatalistic monotheism represents the extremest theocracy, . . . Christianity unites the two opposite doctrines of transcendency and immanency by its ethical conception of the Fatherhood of God which embraces both the exaltation of God above man and man's relationship with God."[2]

As for ourselves, we seem bound by our own reflection to come to the same conclusion to which the religious history of our race thus points us. We must conceive God both as transcendent and as also, in some real sense, immanent in our own spirits and wills. There is among us in certain quarters at the present time a tendency to think that the needs of religion may be satisfied by belief in a God Who is but the vital principle, the *élan vital*, by which all things live, or at most but the will to goodness that moves in some measure within all our hearts. It may well be that such a conception is able to call forth from the human heart a certain feeble religious response, but it cannot be too strongly said that it is rather in the opposite direction that the historical development of the religious consciousness points us. As has been said already, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was a Being with Whom it was possible to have the most intimately personal relations, as of father and child. Nor can this be in any way surprising to us; for it is difficult to see how a purely immanent God can meet the characteristic need of religion at all. We need God primarily—in figures made famous by the singers of Israel—as a refuge and a strength, a high tower, a rock that is higher than ourselves; as One who can do for our values what we ourselves cannot do for them; as One altogether greater and stronger and wiser than we are. A questionnaire which was once sent to William James contained this query: "Do you accept God not so much as a real existent Being, but rather as an ideal to live by?" And James, with unerring judgment, wrote this answer: "More as a powerful ally of my own ideals."[1] But only a transcendent God can be that.

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[1] *Elements of the Science of Religion*, vol. I, pp. 170 ff. Söderblom makes the point no less emphatically. On the one hand he writes: "Bekanntlich tritt *Brahman* auch als göttliches Wesen (Maskul.), als Person auf." (*Op. cit.*, p. 279.) And on the other hand: "Weiter darf nicht vergessen werden, was die mosaische Offenbarung . . . dem Machtbegriff . . . entnommen hat. Nirgends erfuhren die Macht-wahrnehmung und der Tabuschrecken eine so strenge und fürchterliche Fortbildung wie im Mosaismus mit seinem *Cherem*" (p. 321). For an unusually emphatic statement of the theanthropic or immanental tendency present in early Semitic religion alongside of its prevailing theocracy, see Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed., pp. 48 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 208.

Are we then, with another group of writers, to deny that there is any sense in which God is immanent and to regard Him as a Being entirely distinct from His human worshippers? This view leads us directly to a pluralism which makes the spiritual universe comprise, alongside of the Almighty Will of God, the quite independent, though weak and unstable, wills of the human species, and perhaps of other intelligent beings living in other parts of space. Such a conception may seem at first sight capable of meeting our religious need, but further thought will show that, taken by itself, it cannot do so; for it is difficult to see how on such a basis God can be held to have anything directly to do with human life at all. At most it could be held that He was originally responsible for our existence, but that now He leaves us entirely to our own devices, to make or mar our souls as we ourselves choose, He standing aside from the process meanwhile as a sympathetic and anxious Spectator. A view of this kind is not without its lure, but it is doubtful whether many will care to embrace it unless they can add to it some belief in a continuous Divine discipline, in providence, in Fatherly care, in "grace to help in time of need." We want at least to be assured that God has a hand upon our lives. But, if we take a purely transcendent view of His relation to ourselves, this is precisely what we seem to be excluding. Some have endeavoured to divide the vicissitudes of life into two clearly distinguished categories—what a man brings on himself by the exercise of his own free will, and what is determined for him, will he, nill he, from without; and they have declared that whereas the former is altogether our own affair, the latter may be regarded as coming from the Will of God. Yet this dichotomy will not—as Paul and Augustine and Aquinas and Luther and Calvin all knew well—bear the strain of serious reflection. For those elements in my destiny which I have not the power to determine for myself are nearly all of them in some measure, and many of them entirely, determined for me by the wills of other men and women. Even the fact of my birth is wrapped up with the free-will decisions of my parents; my upbringing and early opportunities are even more clearly under the same control; and it may be that my death will be by the will of some fellow-man, as it almost certainly will be the result of factors for some of which my fellows are in part responsible. But if, *ex hypothesi*, the wills of my fellows are in every sense independent of the Will of God, then there seems to be practically no room at all in my life for the exercise of divine Providence and Grace, or indeed of any kind of divine discipline and control. And that must surely be taken as a *reductio ad impossibile* of mere transcendency and pluralism.

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[1] *Familiar Letters of William James*, vol. II, p. 214.

Thus the religious conception of God (and 'god' is a word that has no proper use outside the religious relation) is by its very nature a complex one, and all attempts so to simplify it as to bring it into line with this or that lightly adopted cosmological scheme must in the end meet disaster.[1] The Being to Whom we pray is higher and greater than we, a supreme Soul Whose ways and thoughts are not as the ways and thoughts of the souls of men; and yet we must conceive of Him as working in and through the souls of men, and of these as having their life, and all that is in them of good, from Him. If there be any truth at all in religion, ultimate reality must be so constituted that both sides of this statement are true and (in some fashion hardly to be understood by us) cohere together. Ultimate Being, that is to say, must be *both* personal in its own right *and* pervasively present in all other persons. Boethius classically defined a person as *naturæ rationabilis individua substantia*—'an individual substantiation of rational nature.' Accepting this definition for the purpose of the moment, we should have to say that the God of religion must be regarded *both* as being 'rational nature' in general *and* as possessing 'individual' and 'substantive' (as distinct from merely adjectival) existence. So we are pointed, by the direct evidence of religious experience, to the conception of an ultimate reality which is *both* universal *and* individual, *both* absolute *and* personal. And all philosophies which fall short of such a conception on the one side (as do those of Spinoza and Hegel) or on the other (as do those of William James and the Pragmatic Pluralists and Mr. H. G. Wells in *God the Invisible King*) are immediately felt by us to be doing less than justice to our primary religious perceptions.

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[1] "All simplifications of religious dogma," writes Professor A. N. Whitehead (*Religion in the Making*, Amer. ed., p. 77), "are shipwrecked upon the rock of the problem of evil." And Baron von Hügel writes of "the delicate, difficult paradox, persistently operative in all living and untamed Theism." (*Essays and Addresses*, Second Series, p. 139.)

To Plato belongs the merit of having first led scientific philosophy to an awareness of the problem with which theology thus presents it; though it is not certain that he ever himself reached a satisfactory solution of it. According to the Socratic-Platonic philosophy, the ultimate reality of things is a hierarchical system of Forms or Ideas or, as we should now say, universals. But behind the whole cosmic course of things there is also a supreme Soul, God, the motivating cause of the evolutionary process (*archē tēs kinēseōs*). It has commonly been supposed that Plato identified the God-Soul with that supreme Form in which the world of Forms finds it coping-stone, the Form of the Good. But some recent writers have vigorously denied this, and have urged that Plato conceived of souls in general, and therefore of the God-Soul in particular, as occupying a mediating position between the world of Forms and the world of sense and change.[1] On this view, it is only the Forms which can be said to be immanent in us or of which we can be said to partake (and they are immanent also in God and He partakes of them); and God is a particular Soul Who stands in a purely transcendent relation to us, albeit it is He Who holds in existence the temporal system of things to which we belong. If this interpretation of his teaching be the true one, then certainly "in Plato's own theology . . . God is not quite all that the Christian theist has usually meant by God."[1] But in either case it is to Plato that the credit must go for the opening-up of this great problem. And as Professor Burnet says, "The problem continued to be discussed wherever there was living Greek thought. Some later writers regarded the Good as the Supreme God and made the Creator of the world subordinate to Him, and there were many other attempted solutions. The difficulty is, in fact, the source of the controversies which were ultimately settled by authority of the Council of Nicaea, though this did not prevent it from continuing to trouble the minds of original thinkers."[2] Moreover it is certain that, whether or not Plato himself took the final step, it was taken very confidently by his immediate successors in the Academy, and this tradition continued until finally the Neo-Platonists centred their whole system on the complete identification of God with the Idea of the Good. The trouble with a writer like Plotinus, however, is that in thus holding God to be the ultimate and absolute reality, he seems largely to lose sight of His personality. In becoming identified with the Idea of the Good, God ceases to be a Soul. It is thus only in the philosophy of the Christian ages, and above all in St. Thomas Aquinas, that we find the two sides of the truth held together in even balance.

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[1] *Cf.*, *e. g.*, John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, pp. 336–337; A. E. Taylor, art., "Theism," in *Encycl. of Rel. and Eth.*

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[1] A. E. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

[2] Burnet, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

CHAPTER IX

THE CRITERION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH AND THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

The Criterion of Truth and Falsity in Religion.

I

In the course of the inquiries that lie behind us we have, it is to be hoped, gained a fairly clear conception of that central essence of religion which all religious systems have in common. But, this insight having been reached, and all religious systems now appearing to us as in their inmost nature united, we are still confronted with the most multifarious and confusing divergency in respect of the concrete expression and articulation of this common impulse of faith. That the Spiritual Power Who controls our destiny is such that we may safely entrust to His care the deepest interests of our being—on this, as constituting the authentic core of true religion, we may now be agreed. But to every further question that can be put as to how this Power is disposed towards us, as to what He requires of us, as to how we can best enter into relations with Him, or as to the nature and extent of the help which He may be expected to give us, there seems to be an almost inexhaustible number of possible replies; and there is hardly one of these replies that has not, somewhere and somewhen, been eagerly canvassed by this or that group of our human brethren. How then is the religious seeker to make his choice? How is he to know which line to follow in developing the rudiment of faith that is in him? How is he to decide, for instance, between the vastly different conceptions of God (or of the gods) represented in such great rival religious traditions as Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity? How, even, is he to feel sure that any of these supposedly 'higher' religions represents an authentic advance upon those earlier conceptions of God which are still to be met with among the simpler-minded peoples? Or, if none of these fundamental alternatives causes him any trouble, because his thought is working only within the limits of the religious system into which he happened to be born, then how is he to settle the countless questions of nicer detail that still remain? How is a Christian to choose between Peter and Paul, between Arius and Athanasius, between Calvin and Arminius, between Luther and the Pope? Clearly what is needed is some *criterion* by which the lower alternatives in religion may be distinguished from the higher. The problem of the present chapter is to say what this criterion is.

Very fortunately for the theologian, however, his task is not to invent a criterion, as it were *de novo,* but rather to bring to light a criterion that is already there. The duty of theology, assuredly, is not to provide religion with a new standard of discernment, but only to provide it with a clearer understanding of the standard which it has been *using* from the very beginning. That mankind has always been in possession of some standard is not open to dispute. There is no race which has not, at every period in its history, had to choose between divergent religious beliefs and practices, condemning some and cleaving to others; nor is there any race whose religious ideas and practices have not been subject to more or less constant change and development springing from a preference of newer to older forms. It might perhaps be objected that, though it is obvious that men have always used some touchstone for the discernment of religious truth, it does not necessarily follow that they have always used the same touchstone or that always and everywhere the forward march of religion has been inspired by the same impulse—by the *same kind* of dissatisfaction with the *status quo ante.* Yet a broad view of the history of religion does undoubtedly give us the impression that, in the last analysis, this actually is the case. Individual changes have often been due to accidental causes, and of course religion is affected in respect of its more detailed and external features by a large variety of influences, but, broadly speaking, it may be said that something of a common motive is clearly discernible behind the whole forward movement of religion in every part of the world. If the historian gives ear to the arguments put forward *on either side* in any great religious debate, to the arguments used by the prophet to recommend the new or by his persecutors to defend the old—or, still better, if he uses his historian's acumen to lay bare the real motives behind the spoken word—he will find that appeal is always made to the same general set of considerations. And this means that there is implicitly present in the religious consciousness of man, if only we can lay our finger upon it, an active criterion of religious judgment.

It is matter for surprise that this vitally important question of the true criterion of truth and falsity in religion has so seldom engaged the attention of theologians in a systematic way. In this respect the study of religion has contrasted very unfavourably with the study of morals, for ethical science has long been in the habit of placing the question of the criterion of ethical judgment in the very forefront of its inquiry. In making this complaint we do not, of course, mean that no valuable material bearing on this matter is to be gleaned from the writings of the best theologians, but only that these have not often made it the object of direct analytical discussion.

We may introduce what we have ourselves to say in the matter by referring to a recent statement made regarding it by Mr. Clement Webb in the last chapter of his Gifford Lectures on *God and Personality*. Professor Webb is, in this context, seeking especially for a criterion by means of which we may choose between one religious system and another, but plainly the criterion he suggests is capable of being extended so as to be the basis of a choice between two competing lines of doctrine within a single religious system. What he says is this:

> "What is a suitable criterion? I think that there is one, but that it is easier to apply than to formulate it. Two statements, however, about it I would venture to make, which may at first sight appear to contradict one another. One of these statements will be that we may rightly test a religion by its success in encouraging, and being itself encouraged by, moral and intellectual progress among its votaries. The other statement will be that the only true test of the rank of one religion as compared with another is to be sought in the greater or less extent to which it exhibits the specific nature of Religion, and not that of Science or of Morality as distinguished from Religion."[1]

Elsewhere in the volume this is summed up by saying that the criterion "is to be found in the capacity of a religion to encourage and be encouraged by moral and intellectual progress in its

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 245.

votaries, yet only so far as this is done by exhibiting the specific nature of Religion in a particular manner."[1] Applying this criterion to the various competing religious systems of the world, Professor Webb concludes that "there is none which has shown more capacity for maintaining and even developing itself in the atmosphere of what would be generally admitted to be the highest moral and intellectual culture" than Christianity, and that nevertheless its most characteristic doctrine of 'personality in God' can be shown to be "but the fuller development of a factor in some degree present in all religion."[2] Now there are plainly elements in this statement which point in the right direction, yet we cannot feel that, regarded as a whole, it correctly solves our problem. For one thing, it savours too strongly of the very common and current, yet undoubtedly fallacious, notion that religions are to be judged by the measure of their congruity with human culture as a whole, that religion being most worthy of our adherence which fits best into the life of the highest civilization. A view of this kind seems to pervade the work of Tiele.[3] Jastrow has defended a somewhat similar conception, claiming that "the single principle which presides over the development of religion" is "the relation of religion to life" and that that religion may be said to be the highest in which the bond between religion and life is closest.[4] In America at the present moment the view is very commonly put forward that religious ideas are to be judged by the measure of their conformity with the current conclusions of natural science.[5]

Now, on a first casual consideration it may seem plausible to say that the rank of a religion may be estimated by the grade of general culture with which it is associated, and that the highest religion must accordingly be that which is most closely associated with the highest civilization the world knows. Second thoughts find us more doubtful. For, to begin with, even if we grant that the progress of religion goes hand in hand with the general progress of culture, we see at once that that can only be because religion is an integral and important part of general culture, and that therefore we are not in a position to make a general statement regarding the level of civilization which any people have reached until we have *already* formed some opinion as to how high they stand religiously. It is, as a matter of fact, easier to form an opinion as to the level at which a people stand in some particular department of culture such as music, statecraft, commerce, natural science or (that with which we have here to do) religion, than it is to attempt a generalisation as to the value of their civilization as a whole; and we also find it easier to *compare* two religions, two commercial or political systems, two literary or musical traditions, with a view to saying which should be ranked the higher, than to compare two civilizations as a whole with a like end in view. We are accordingly in no way helped by the suggestion that we should judge a religion according to the level of civilization with which it is associated or into which it best fits. For indeed by what shall we judge of a nation's culture, if not (as on this suggestion we are, in order to avoid circularity of reasoning, debarred from doing) by the purity and nobility of its religion? By the efficiency and intricacy of its railway system? By the number of its ships or of its soldiers? By the extent to which machine-made goods have displaced handicraft within its borders? By its reserve of gold?

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 247–248.

[3] See especially the second volume of his Gifford Lectures.

[4] *The Study of Religion* (1901), pp. 117 ff.

[5] *Cf.*, *e. g.*, C. A. Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion* (1922).

These queries lead us to the second point of interrogation which serious reflection will prompt us to place against the view under discussion. Are we really so sure that religion necessarily progresses *pari passu* with the advance of other kinds of culture? Has it been, for instance, the peoples and the periods of greatest intellectual attainment that have given us our highest thought of God? Without going to the opposite extreme and holding with Macaulay in his *Essay on Milton* that as civilization advances "men make better theories and worse poems," we can well doubt the soundness of any such generalisation. And in particular a word may here be said about the idea that that form of religion is best which is in completest harmony with the latest conclusions of natural science. *That,* at least, is contrary to good judgment. It is of course true that an absence of conflict between religion and science is a thing devoutly to be wished, and it is also true that the presence of such a conflict means that there is something wrong somewhere, though whether it be with our religion or with our science can certainly not be settled in advance. But it would be as profound a mistake as could here be made to suppose that a religious experience is therefore poor *as religion,* because it is united in the mind of its possessor either with profound scientific ignorance or with some out-of-date system of scientific knowledge. Many of the individuals who have contributed most notably to the world's store of religious insight have been almost unlettered. And He to whom we owe most of all in this matter is very far from being associated in our minds with advanced scientific knowledge. Moreover when we read that "Christianity, as soon as it has become transfused with the spirit and transformed by the method of modern science, will bring about the Millennium,"[1] we cannot but be sensible of the shortsightedness of the advice that is here given us. For the lesson taught us by the history of Christianity is surely not that we should show greater zeal in tying up our soul's faith with the scientific theories of the present age, but rather that we should show greater caution in so doing. The trouble with those types of Christian thought which our present advisors would so severely condemn was precisely that they had been too diligent in welding into a single system the abiding convictions of Christian faith and the most up-to-date scientific cosmology of their own day. That which is 'up-to-the-moment' only lasts a moment. The more assiduity we show in forging links of steel between the faith of Christ and even such scientific results as for the time being look most secure, the more deeply disturbing will it be for us when these latter come (as they surely will one day come) to be called in question, and the more are we courting a repetition of the fate of those thinkers whom we set out by condemning. Those of our contemporaries who are so eager to express their Christianity in terms of the 'scientific' thought of their own decade—psycho-analysis, auto-suggestion, instinct-psychology, behaviourism, spiritism, relativity, an undisciplined evolutionism, and the like—are running the serious risk of appearing to their successors of a future age ten times more antiquated (that is to say, more completely children of their own age and so falling within their own favourite category of 'historical curiosities') than the authors of the *De Civitate Dei,* the *Summa Theologiæ,* and the *Institutio Christianæ Religionis.* There is surely something of wisdom, even if it has sometimes expressed itself in exaggerated forms, in the insistence with which the Ritschlians beseech us to avoid the temptation of seeking too close and complete a synthesis between our science and our faith.

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[1] Quoted from Dr. Stanton Coit by Ellwood, *op. cit.,* p. viii.

We ought, then, to be able to say something more in defence of the faith that is in us than that it fits very neatly into modern life as a whole. Religion is to be judged according to the extent to which it displays its own proper excellence and, in the last resort, by nothing else. And though we criticise one half of Professor Webb's statement of his criterion because it does not guard itself sufficiently against the erroneous views of which we have been speaking, yet in the other half of it this very point is firmly insisted on. There are indeed *two* things in his statement that seem to lead us towards the desired conclusion: first, the suggestion that a religion is to be tested by the extent to which it "exhibits the specific nature of religion"; and, secondly, the suggestion that the test to be applied is in some way an ethical one or has something to do with morality. If, however, we are right in our general view that religion is in its specific nature an endeavour to give a deeper interpretation and application to ethical value, these two suggestions turn out to be for us, not two, but one.

It should, in fact, have been clear to us from the start that it is impossible to separate the question of the criterion of truth and falsity in religion from the question of religion's inmost essence. To answer one of these questions is at the same time to answer the other. Religions can be tested only from within. They are to be ranked as high or low, adequate or inadequate, true or false, *in accordance with the extent to which they are true to their own central principle—the root idea for which all religion stands; or, more accurately, in accordance with the adequacy with which they positively express and expand that principle.* It is indeed with a view to using it as an instrument of criticism that theology most naturally undertakes the search for the organising principle of the religious consciousness, just as in ethics we undertake the search for the ultimate norm of moral value in order that we may apply it as a touchstone to the varying moral judgments of men.

If then we have found the essence of religious faith in the attempt to interpret reality in the light of our ultimate values, the test of any particular faith will be the adequacy with which this interpretation is carried through. And this will be true not only when we are dealing with conflicting systems of religious belief (conflicting 'religions,' as we commonly call them), but also when we have to do with conflicting opinions, within the same religious system, concerning some particular point of doctrine. In both cases the question will be which of the several possibilities is most deeply expressive of that union between existence and goodness in which we found the essence of religion to lie.

The question now presents itself, however, as to how it comes about that such differences should emerge at all. If the intention of all religion is to envisage reality in terms of value, where does the variation come in? Höffding, who has devoted some hard thinking to the questions now under discussion, answers this one as follows:[1]

> "Important differences in the nature of religious faith are conditioned . . . by differences of value and of the motives of evaluation, by differences of knowledge of reality, and by differences in the energy with which value and reality are brought together and compared. These differences are not all of equal significance. The last-named is evidently the most important."

The first part of this statement we may in a general way accept, but we must demur against the ascription of chief importance to differences in the energy with which value and reality are brought together. It is true that some of the less significant and vital cults known to history, and still more certain uninspired periods in the history of almost every cult, may be seriously lacking in such energy; and the same thing is notably true of many of the idiosyncratic and 'viewy' pronouncements on religious doctrine which nowadays emanate from single individuals. But, broadly speaking, we may say that wherever religion has been really alive, and been expressive of the mature reflection of any considerable body of men, it has shown real energy and zealous thoroughness in thinking out reality, as it presented itself, in terms of such values as were then in secure possession. We shall indeed presently find it necessary to add to this statement one important qualification, namely, that the application of a newly discovered value to the Divine Reality seems constantly to lag a pace or two behind the practical grasp of the value itself; but though this fact will allow us to include "differences in the energy with which value and reality are brought together" as a minor cause of religious differences, it clearly cannot justify us in doing more. The primary cause of difference in religion must therefore be either difference in men's grasp of reality or difference in men's values. As to the former, while it is plain enough that different systems of religious doctrine do differ in respect of the cosmological framework in terms of which they are worked out—and that, for example, the teaching of Jesus Christ differed notably in this respect from that of Aristotle, and both from that of any modern man who has embraced the evolutionary hypothesis—yet we must repeat that *this* kind of difference between one man's religion and another's, or between one religious system and another, is not of very great *religious* importance and is always very easy to smooth out. We cannot fairly judge a religion by the modernity of the cosmological framework in which it is set, for the excellence and nobility of a religion is not impaired in any very deep or serious way by the fact that it is united in the mind of the worshipper with even the most antediluvian of cosmologies. Moreover a religious system might be expressed in terms of the most radically different world-views and still remain essentially the same at heart. An instance would be the essential (we do not, of course, say the complete) identity of St. Paul's faith in God and our own, despite the difference between our view of the world and his.

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[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 119.

There thus remains as the true primary cause of all the most significant variations in religious belief *the difference of the values in terms of which reality is envisaged* by different races and groups, and at different periods within the same race or group. Differing religious systems and doctrines are to be tested and ranked, in the last resort, according to the values which are embodied in them. Of two religions that one is the higher, and of two doctrines that one is the truer, which embodies the higher ethical value. Nor is there any other test which may properly be applied.

Here then is the solution of our problem. The criterion of truth and falsity in religion can be nothing else than the extent of the satisfaction offered to our moral consciousness. The only question we can relevantly ask ourselves about any religious creed or dogma is this: How far does it seem to be inspired by, to harmonize with, and effectively to carry into its own transcendent region, those values which our consciences declare to be deepest and noblest on earth? And Christianity can lay no other claim to be the highest and truest religion in the world than just that it envisages the Divine in terms of what we think ourselves able to discern to be the highest values revealed to us in our human intercourse with one another.

If it were desirable to say anything further in proof that we have hit upon the true criterion, we would appeal to the reasons which men will usually be found giving for their preference of one doctrine to another; their preference, perhaps, of Christianity to Buddhism, where they know something of the two; or of personal immortality to any doctrine of 're-absorption'; or of universalism to the doctrine of Heaven and Hell. Or even more than to the arguments and considerations they put forward with their lips we would appeal to those hidden motives which, though not always noticed or correctly analysed and expressed by men themselves, yet appear to those studious in such matters to be the real causes of their preferences and decisions in the field of belief.

The Nature + Laws of Religious progr

II

It will at once be plain that if we have been successful in putting our finger upon the true criterion of religious judgment we have at the same time given our answer to the much-discussed question of *the nature of religious progress* from the lowest cults and creeds to the highest. For if it be true that we must hold that form of religion to be the highest which reflects the highest human values, then we shall grade the religions of the world according to the loftiness of the values which they reflect, and shall find progress present in those periods and processes where the movement seems to be from lower to higher values, and regress where it seems to be from higher to lower. A forward step in religion is but another name for the fact that some loftier value has been glimpsed in men's relations with one another and that it has, perhaps a little tardily, been applied to their thought of the invisible world.

This result may be summed up by saying that *men's ideas of God, and their religious ideas generally, keep pace with, or lag but a few paces behind, their advancing moral values.* Here we have the primary guiding principle of religious development.

We must accordingly here again remind ourselves of an important discrimination which we had occasion to make at an earlier point.[1] A generation ago human religion was very commonly dichotomised into nature-religions and ethical religions, and it was taught that religion began by being quite non-ethical and gradually became more and more ethical in character until finally we reach in Christianity a completely ethicised religion.[2] Or even where it was seen that there could never have been a stage in which men's religion was wholly disconnected from their *mores* or social values, matters were still represented as if men began by thinking of the gods in terms of the lowest values known to them and gradually came to think of them in terms of higher and higher values until at last they thought of them in terms of the Best. As against any such view we have already declared our conviction that men have *always* thought of God in terms of the best *they knew,* and that the advance has been due primarily, not to a closer drawing together of the threads which connect the gods with human values, but to an advance in these values themselves. Of course there is a very real sense in which a lofty moral code may be said to be more moral than one that is crude and undeveloped, and in that sense the higher religions differ from the lower ones precisely by being more ethical than they. But the point to be maintained is that this does not mean that, as religion grows, it acquires a growingly close relationship with the *ethos* of the worshipper, but only that the *ethos* with which it is from the beginning intimately related itself grows higher. We must hold, with Höffding, that "*every religious standpoint gathers up into its conception of God the highest known values.*"[3] Or we may borrow the phrase used by another distinguished contemporary thinker to describe the *Leitmotiv* of his own philosophy, and say that the guiding-thread of historical religion has always been "the principle of interpretation by the highest we know."[1] Or we may quote from Goethe:

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[1] See pp. 310 f., *supra.*

[2] The history of this view might profitably be traced from Schleiermacher to Tiele.

[3] *Philosophy of Religion,* Eng. transl., p. 61.

> "Im Innern ist ein Universum auch,
> Daher der Völker löblicher Gebrauch,
> Dass jeglicher das Beste, was er kennt,
> Er Gott, ja seinen Gott benennt,
> Ihm Himmel und Erden übergiebt,
> Ihn fürchtet und womöglich liebt."

"Everyone gives the name of God to the Best he knows." And yet we have already indicated a not unimportant qualification which must be added to this general statement, namely, that we find almost everywhere in history a certain tardiness in the application of newly realised ethical values to religious conceptions. All new values, as we long ago agreed, are discovered in the world of moral and social relationships before they are envisaged as belonging also to a higher world, and the transition is seldom made without some difficulty and delay. Hence if we are to say that religion keeps pace with *mores*, we must remember that this does not mean that it keeps quite abreast of them; for it nearly always lags a little way behind and is, moreover, constantly showing signs of trying to catch up. This fact—the temporary persistence in religious tradition of moral ideas and a moral standard which have already been outgrown by the community in its social and civic life—has often been commented upon, and many attempts have been made to lay bare its causes in a precise way.[2] Speaking very generally, we may doubtless sum these up in the one word *conservatism*, which is but another name for the sentiment that

> "makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of."

Thus it comes about that all ordinary reforms in religion are immediately due, not to the dawning realisation of a new ethical value, so much as to the carrying over of an existing value into the sphere of religious belief and practice. Indeed, if the reformer were not able to appeal to the already-formed conscience of the people in support of the changes he proposes to introduce into their creed, he could have no real chance of meeting with any degree of success. The true reformer's argument has always been of the type, "If ye then, evil as ye are, . . . how much more will God . . .!"[1]

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[1] Professor Pringle-Pattison in his *Idea of God*, p. 340.

[2] *Cf.*, *e. g.*, Webb, *A Century of Anglican Theology and Other Lectures*, pp. 71 ff.

Nevertheless, if we regard the matter broadly, it is true that the realisation of a new ethical value has always been the ultimate cause, if not exactly the proximate occasion, of reform and advancement in religious faith. Indeed, in the case of the greatest religious revolutions the two have almost seemed to go together, so that the heightened ethical sensibility and its credal accompaniments are definitely connected with the same historical figure or movement. To take an example, the world owes to Jesus of Nazareth not only a new conception of God but also the new ethical teaching of which it was the natural and logical consequence. Possibly a statement of the same kind might be made about the Protestant Reformation. But however that may be, it remains true of every forward move in religion, great or small, sudden or gradual, corporate or individual, that it goes back for its ultimate causation to some heightened realisation of value in the ethical sphere. As has been well said by Rauwenhoff, "ethical development is the propelling force in the development of religion and religious faith," and again, "the real reforming agent in religion is the ethical factor"; for "faith must always be grounded in man's power of appreciating values (*Wertschätzungsvermögen*)."[2]

In order to avoid all misunderstanding, it is worth while pointing out once again that there is no discrepancy between the fact here insisted on and the equally certain fact that the moral progress of humanity must have been even slower and more uncertain than in fact it has proved to be, had not religion in its turn exercised an inspiring effect upon moral practice. New spiritual insights first reveal themselves as a quickening and illumination of the conscience, and it is only when the conscience has fully made them its own that they begin to be applied to that transcendent spiritual order from which (as from its *causa essendi*) conscience must be held to proceed; yet, had conscience not been strengthened and established by the co-operation of the *existing* religious conceptions, it would hardly have had the power to rise to those higher moral insights out of which the *new* religious conceptions have grown.

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[1] Matt. 7 : 11.

[2] *Religionsphilosophie*, Ger. transl., 2nd ed., pp. 81, 123, 172. "Alle grossen Reformen in der Religion," he writes again on p. 175, "sind sittliche Reformen."

If then we turn our attention to the broad lines of the religious development of our race, we shall find that it follows, stage by stage, the line of the development of the racial *mores*. And so far as it is possible to classify human societies according to the level of moral, social, and political development which they have reached at the time of speaking, so will the religious systems of the world fall naturally into the same classification. The rough categories which serve us for the subdivision into different successive 'levels' or 'stages' of ethico-political development will serve us also for the different successive stages in the historical development of religion. That is why the most successful of all attempts to classify the religions of the world has been that which arranged them in accordance with the form of social and political organisation characteristic of the peoples and the periods to which they belong—a principle which yields, in the main, a threefold division, into tribal, national, and universal (*i. e.* international) religions.

Stages in Religious progress and the
Classification of Religions.

III

The problem of classification in religion has, however, been beset with so much confusion and difficulty that we must pause to say something about it before proceeding further with our argument. The question as to how the religious systems of the world may best be classified is a very old one, and in the nineteenth century particularly it was a favourite topic in the schools. But when the problem was first tackled, clear thinking about it was seriously hampered by the tendency (already discussed by us at an earlier stage) to regard human religion as broken up into a large number of separate 'religions' which bore no relation to one another, so that the task of science was simply one of arranging or grouping them in separate pigeon-holes, as we might group discrete objects like flint arrowheads or postage stamps. Of course it *is* true that almost all the religion in the world is enjoyed within some corporate system of religious tradition, and it is also true that the different systems of tradition have shown a remarkable degree of exclusiveness towards one another. But the more closely we study these seemingly exclusive and diverse systems, and the more intimately we come to understand them from the inside, the more they appear to us to be but partially divergent expressions of a common impulse and principle. The result will be that instead of endeavouring to find suitably labelled pigeon-holes for a multiplicity of religions we shall find ourselves interested rather in distinguishing the different divergent directions in which one and the same heart of religion has sought to elaborate its self-expression.

Nor is that all. For if we give still closer consideration to the material before us, we shall begin to realise that an almost indefinite number—though not all—of what seemed to us to be the most important divergences between the religions of this people and that are not really divergences in the strict sense at all, but represent merely different levels of development. For example, we may come to suspect that we were mistaken in supposing that even such a religion as that of the Red Indian tribes represented a fundamentally divergent line of development from that of the religion of Israel. For books like Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* and, still more, certain later researches (such as those of Sir J. G. Frazer) into Semitic origins have opened our eyes to the fact that *there was a time* when the religion of Israel must have been remarkably like that of the North American tribes in our own modern age; and we begin to feel, conversely, that under certain conditions even North American totemism might in time have developed into something not very unlike the faith of Moses. Possibly the most striking example of religious divergence with which we are anywhere confronted is that between the Hinduistic group of religions and Christianity. There, if ever, we seem to find two essentially disparate lines of development being consistently followed out. A clear case of "East is East and West is West," we say perhaps. Yet who knows how much of the apparent divergence may be really due to the fact that the Eastern peoples and ourselves do not stand at the same level of development? The current opposition of East and West has itself been subjected to penetrating criticism by Mr. Edwyn Bevan. "Why the terms appear to me unfortunate and misleading," he writes, "is that the contrast we see to-day is not merely between peoples of different blood and habitation but between peoples at different stages of development. Qualities which are ascribed with an unreflecting readiness to the 'Oriental' often turn out on inspection to be not in the least peculiar to the East, but qualities universal among peoples at the most primitive stage. Many of them might have been discovered just as much in mediæval Europe. The Crusaders would find it much easier to enter into the feelings of many Oriental peoples to-day than into those of their own descendants in France or Germany. The West for a great part of its history has not been 'Western.'"[1]

The result is that the older problem of classifying the outstanding traditional religious systems of the world has been in large measure displaced by the newer one of tracing the main line of development which advancing religion seems typically to follow. The old vertical lines which were used for the division and subdivision of world-religion have, in instance after instance, been replaced by horizontal ones.

Let us now look back, from our present vantage-ground, upon one or two of the outstanding classifications suggested during the past century and attempt to estimate their value. Max Müller all his life insisted that religions should be classified on a *linguistic*, which for him was the same as to say a *racial*, basis. Three main divisions of human religion were thus distinguished by him—the Indo-Germanic religions, the Semitic religions, and the 'Turanian' religions.[2] Whatever may be thought of this particular way of carrying it out (especially as regards the designation 'Turanian'), it cannot be denied that this principle of classification has its uses. If our object is merely to take stock of the various alternative religious cults now existing in the world, perhaps we cannot do better than follow the lines of racial demarcation; for these certainly go deeper than do the lines of geographical demarcation which some handbooks have elected to follow. But it cannot really be pretended that a classification on such lines is in any sense what the logicians would call a *natural* classification, and Max Müller signally fails to show that it can be so regarded. Racial differences may account for certain minor peculiarities of creed and cult, but (as we have seen) the main lines of divergence are to be otherwise explained. The true *fundamentum divisionis* of religions must be something far more germane to their inner essence than are language and race. Another widely prevalent method has been to classify religions *according to the nature of the object of their worship*. The trouble with this view has usually been that, when attention has been fixed rather upon the comparison of the finished products than upon their genesis and genealogical interconnection, the really salient and genetically significant differences between the different objects of worship have not been hit upon. A very common division of this kind has been into nature-religions, animistic (or spiritistic) religions, polytheistic religions, and monotheistic religions. But, in the first place, the distinction between naturism and animism must be held to rest upon a cross-division, because it is only when they are conceived as animated that natural objects are worshipped at all.[1] And in the second place, the distinction between polytheism and monotheism assumes deep religious significance only so far as we get away from that *numerical* interpretation of it which in these classifications has been so much in evidence. The fact simply is that all such classifications are useful and natural in proportion as we can regard them, not as pigeon-holing finished products, but as setting forth the successive developmental stages through which all religion typically passes. The division into naturistic, spiritistic, polytheistic, and monotheistic religions would be a natural division only if every religion that is now monotheistic had previously been in turn the other three. And that is why, as has already been said, the most successful of all attempted classifications of religions has been that which pigeon-holed them *according to the form of socio-political organisation with which they are associated*, dividing them into tribal, national, and international. For these divisions do genuinely represent the stages through which human society seems typically to pass, if its natural development is not arrested. Here we do seem to be laying the main stress on horizontal rather than on vertical lines of division, and to have to do rather with a genealogical tree than with a bookkeeper's columns. And with that there is more hope of our eventually ridding ourselves of the habit of 'classifying,' as though it were made up of so many discrete and lifeless units, what is really the single living and growing body of human faith, here still almost embryonic, there more fully and nobly developed; here showing a one-sided tendency in one direction, there in another; here going seemingly astray, there keeping to the straight path of progress. The development of the conception of God is illustrated in the case of

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[1] See his essay on "The East and the West" in *Hellenism and Christianity*, pp. 12–13.

[2] See his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1873), lecture III.

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[1] "In regard to the worship of nature, I mean by that the worship of natural phenomena conceived as animated, conscious, and endowed with both the power and the will to benefit or injure mankind."—Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature*, vol. I, p. 17.

IV

Returning then to the consideration of what seem to be the main lines of the religious development of mankind, we propose to illustrate them by following as far as we can, and with the help of those who are expert in this field, the successive stages in the development of the conception of God among the Hebrew people. In doing this we are, of course, but tracing the evolution of one (albeit the central) aspect of the religion of a single people, and it is impossible to determine in advance how far the development among other peoples has followed a similar course. But the broad outline of it is recognisable, though in varying degrees of completeness, in the history of many other peoples, and there is thus real reason to regard it as being largely true to type. In the case of the Hebrews alone, however, are we able to trace the development of the thought of God from a level not very far from the lowest right up to what we believe to be the highest that the world has known.

If we go as far back as historical research can carry us, we find the Hebrew people to be composed of a number of nomad tribes inhabiting some part of the Arabian desert. About the religion of the Arabian or Semitic tribes generally at this stage—and the designation 'Semitic' includes the Phenicians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Edomites, Moabites, the Arabs proper, and several other peoples, as well as the Hebrews—there are some things that may be said with confidence. Their general outlook seems to have been a fully developed animism. The world for them was full of spiritual beings who were all localised as being associated with some particular spot in the desert, usually an oasis; and especially with some striking natural object in the oasis—a boulder, an evergreen tree, a grove of date-palms, the life-giving well itself, or sometimes a mountain. This object was, as we might put it, the spirit's body, and the spirit was regarded as the owner or *Baal* of the locality where the object was situated. Many of the spirits were regarded with religious awe and made the objects of religious attention; they were given the honorific title of *'El* (Assyrian, *ilu;* Arabic, *ilah*, etc.), which seems to mean the possessor of supernatural power, that is, of the Semitic equivalent of *mana;* and the locality where each resided was called a *beth-el*—to mention only the Hebrew form of a word, meaning 'the abode of the mighty one,' which has near parallels in other Semitic languages. Near every nomad encampment there would thus be localised some well-known spirit, the sphere of whose influence and power extended over the immediately surrounding region, and the bedouin's first duty after pitching his tent would be to engage in such ritual acts in the 'holy place' as would serve to propitiate this spirit and secure his good offices. Then as, gradually, a certain part of the desert came to be thought of by each tribe as its particular home, and especially as the tribes began in some degree to settle down each in a particular locality, breeding sheep and afterwards tilling the ground, their worship would naturally become more and more confined to the one or two spirits whose sanctuaries were in their own particular oases. The tribes were small, being really 'clans' strictly based on the principle of kinship, and the evidence is that each tribe came in the end, as a general rule, to worship only one spirit.

Each tribe thus came to be identified with one or two deities, and the relationship between these and the tribe as a whole came to be very close. If the tribe made suitable offerings to its god, it could count upon its god to keep the oasis fertile and to shield it from the attacks of enemy tribes. But of course the god had no power, and could accordingly demand no homage, outside the immediate vicinity of his sanctuary. If a tribe migrated, it would naturally transfer its allegiance to the god of its new camping-ground, who alone could help it there. If a man travelled, he would worship the spirits of the oases through which he passed. For the world was still peopled with many gods, though the worship of a small and more or less stationary clan would normally be confined to one. The name of Kathenotheism has been given to this stage in the development of religion—when a tribe comes to identify itself closely, and in ordinary circumstances exclusively, with the worship of a single one among the many superhuman beings that are believed to exist in the world.

There is every reason to suppose that the Israelite tribes shared all these ideas and practices with their fellow-Semites.

The next step in Semitic religion comes with the birth of the nations, which were formed by the union of numbers of tribes. There could be no real national unity while the different contributory tribes continued to worship their different gods, and so there arose a religious problem of the first magnitude. Usually it semes to have been met by the expedient of each tribe adopting the gods of all the other tribes and placing them on much the same level as its own autochthonous deity, so that kathenotheism gave place to polytheism. If so many gods were to be worshipped, some distinction must be made between them, and a characteristic name must be found for each, instead of calling all by the varying dialectic forms of the one old name. When a multitude of deities receive separate names, and when the functions of deity are separately parcelled out among them, we have the populous pantheon typical of genuinely polytheistic religion. So far as we know, it is by this process of syncratism[1] that all polytheisms have been formed. Among the Semitic peoples the process was carried furthest by the Babylonians and Assyrians, the reason being that no other Semitic nations were so successful in forming a consolidated empire out of originally heterogeneous elements. "When every small community was on terms of frequent hostility with all its neighbours, the formation of a polytheistic system was impossible."[2]

The fame of the Israelite tribes is in no small measure due to the fact that they followed another and less usual alternative. In this, if their own historical memory is at all to be trusted, they were guided by the commanding genius of Moses. It was

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[1] I prefer this form of the word as being one degree less barbarous than that more commonly employed.

[2] Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed., p. 39.

Moses who succeeded in welding the clans of Israel into a nation; and instead of bending his efforts (as did the Babylonian priests) to the collection of all the local deities into a single pantheon, he proclaimed to his people the worship of a single new god whose name was Yahweh. Who then was Yahweh? And where had Moses learned his allegiance to him? We cannot certainly tell. Some have thought he was originally the household god of Moses' own family, or of the house of Joseph, but it is more likely that he was a god known to the nomadic Kenites of the Sinaitic peninsula. At all events there is no doubt that Mount Sinai was his seat, and that he was closely associated in the minds of the Israelites with the thunder and lightning and cloud that were so often to be seen about its peaks. Under the leadership of Moses the tribes came to believe that it was this Sinaitic deity that had led them out of Egypt; and that henceforward they all alike owed him a common allegiance; and thus arose together the Israelitish nation and the Israelitish religion. Moreover, Yahweh had promised to lead them safely across the desert to the fertile land of Canaan and to establish them there as an agricultural people. And it is characteristic of the growing religion that, though his seat was still for centuries to be regarded as being on Sinai, it was held that his 'presence' could follow the people through the desert in the sacred Ark, which was plainly a device for carrying the *mana* of the desert into the land of the Canaanites. Perhaps there was a piece of Sinaitic rock in the Ark—we do not know; but we know that even after the promised land was reached his presence still remained somehow in the Ark, which now became Israel's central shrine. The forward step was significant. As time went on, Yahweh became more and more the God of Israel, less and less the God of the Sinaitic desert; and thus he gradually came to be identified with Israel's new land and to be regarded as the source of its fertility and the guardian of its borders. Here, however, was a new problem, for every high hill and every green tree in Canaan already had its own Baal. In what relation were Yahweh and his worship to stand to these Baalim and their worship?

Moses had demanded that the worship of Yahweh should take precedence over that of all the gods of the separate tribes. The more the people confined their allegiance to Yahweh, the better would it go with them through that long journey when he alone could help. Yahweh was a jealous god, and his first 'word' was "Thou shalt have no other gods." But it is doubtful whether Moses wholly forbade the paying of homage to the tribal gods; nor was there any thought in his mind that under different circumstances the propitiation of other gods would not be necessary too. Indeed, outside of Yahweh's territory, as extended by the presence of his Ark in the desert or in Canaan, it would be useless to pay him homage. "How shall we sing Yahweh's song in a strange land?"—so it was long afterwards written. When Cain wishes to flee from the presence of Yahweh, he is represented as having merely to leave the country and go into the land of Nod. To David the threat of exile means that he should have to 'serve other gods.'[1] Naaman, anxious to worship Yahweh after his return to his own Syrian home, asks Elisha for two loads of Israelitish soil to carry home with him.[2] And now in Canaan, the question is whether the gods of the land are to be granted any worship. The problem was solved in the main by a resort to syncratism. The Baalim were worshipped, but their worship was encouraged only so far as they were identified with Yahweh, their shrines becoming his. The process, of course, was gradual. For a time the separate worship of the Baalim of the land was not uncommon and, in certain circumstances (as when visiting country places whither Yahweh's power had hardly penetrated), was not interfered with. But from the first any division of allegiance was felt to be contrary to the spirit of Yahwistic religion, and more and more it came to be deprecated.

Thus the monolatrous worship of Yahweh came to be established in Canaan. The contract formed in Sinai between him and his chosen people Israel became an ever more intimate bond. There was, of course, as yet no thought of monotheism. Other peoples had other gods, bound in like relations of kinship or contract (as the case might be) with them. Moab, for example, had Chemosh; and it was natural and right that Moab should worship Chemosh, who alone would be likely to help her. It was clearly recognised that there would be no point in a Moabite or Ammonite worshipping Israel's God—unless as a mark of homage during a visit. Moreover, from the beginning Yahweh had been very notably a war-god—a "Yahweh of Hosts," as they called him—and his covenant with Israel meant that, if they kept their side of the contract, he would always side with them in battle; just as Chemosh would with Moab. The wars of the nations were thus essentially wars between the gods of the nations, and no man would gain anything by worshipping the gods of his enemies. With this we have arrived at the level of a monolatrous national religion.

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[1] I Sam. 26: 19–20.

[2] II Kings 5 : 17.

As we look back over this period of development we can very clearly see what were the motive forces inspiring it. Israel's conception of deity changed for no other reason than that her ideals had changed. In the old days of bedouin wandering from oasis to oasis, what mattered most to every Israelite was the fertility of his particular halting-places, their abundance in date-palms, and springs of water.[1] And his gods were the unseen powers that insured this fertility and this abundance. Gradually his values were transformed. He became dissatisfied with nomadic tribal life, and soon a small nation was formed and a land found for it to live in. What mattered now was national unity, numerous and healthy flocks, good seasons for crops, and above all security from enemies and success in battle with them. Consequently deity came to be conceived as the ideal guardian of these new supreme interests. The nation's god was one god; he prospered Israel's flocks, gave the land rain and the people food, and made their armed hosts victorious in battle. From first to last the Israelite regarded his religion as providing a transcendent sanction, a more-than-human significance and security, for those 'ends of action' which to him were supreme as constituting the deepest welfare of the social organism to which he belonged; and at each successive stage he ascribed to his god or gods those characters which best fitted them to be the perfect wardens of that welfare. In the early stages his religion, like his *mores*, was almost wholly a social affair. Neither personal ethics nor personal religion had yet developed very far. But this does not mean that the authentic note of moral obligation was in any wise absent. From the beginning there was a sense of the individual's duty to his tribe, and a sense of guilt in the presence of the tribal deity, when the tribe had been sinned against. Even at this stage it was not what the individual *wanted*, as such, that his gods were believed to secure for him, but rather what he felt he *ought* to want—the tribal welfare.

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[1] "It has been written that 'the goods which savage man strives after are material and sensuous; and the customs of his tribe, which are his only norms of action, simply express the stated ways by which he believes the material well-being of his group is promoted.' "—Galloway, *Principles of Religious Development*, p. 227.

We have now reached the epoch marked by the great prophetic movement of the eighth and seventh centuries B. C. The earlier prophets were mainly concerned with the attempt to preserve the purity of the Mosaic religion against the competition of the local Baalim. Their aim was to prevent the comparatively lofty national monolatry, which Israel had brought with it from the desert, from relapsing into a confused and heterogeneous polytheism with lower ethical standards and a culture less purely expressive of the national ideals. But the great figures of the prophetic movement gradually began to go further, and to work, not merely for conservation, but for advance. It is not difficult to see that the secret of this advance lay in a deepening of Israel's ethical standards. Men became more and more sensible of the inadequacy and narrowness of the earlier national ideals. As the land became settled, they came to feel that nations cannot live by bread alone; that there were things more important even than safety and military supremacy and the possession of flocks and herds and a land that flowed with milk and honey; and that the welfare of a people was not to be measured by the success of its arms or the abundance of its possessions. The code of *mores* came more and more to deal with *inward* goods. It came to be felt that things like purity, honesty, fidelity, and charity were what really mattered most to Israel. And Yahweh now becomes the guardian of these new values. The covenant formed on Sinai takes on a new meaning. Sinai's God comes, by slow stages, to be conceived, not primarily as Israel's champion, but as the champion of the righteous. At first this change expresses itself merely as a deepened consciousness of the fact that Yahweh will be mindful of his side of the covenant only if Israel is mindful of hers. Then gradually Israel's side of the covenant comes to be interpreted in more inward terms. The conditions of God's favour come to be regarded as righteousness and inward purity. And finally the feeling grows that it is only so far as Israel maintains a higher standard of righteousness than the other peoples that Yahweh is specially interested in her at all. That indeed may be said to be the final message of the prophets, just as their final warning is that, if Israel does not turn aside from her sins, Yahweh will altogether reject his chosen people. It has become growingly clear to them that, though race counts for much, righteousness counts for more. So Yahweh, from being merely the Lord of Israel's hosts and from having no interests outside Israel, comes finally to be the God of all righteousness.

Slowly, very slowly, the implications of this change of values begin to reveal themselves. It comes to be seen that while outward goods like military supremacy and lands and cattle are competitive in character, inward goods like righteousness and justice and mercy can be possessed by all at once—"without diminution and without envy," in Pascal's famous words. Inward goodness is not a monopoly of any one nation. It has a deeper sanction even than that of the Sinaitic covenant and the Mosaic code. The duty to seek it is binding upon all nations, so that, as St. Paul afterwards said, "they are all without excuse." We may find the beginnings of this realisation in the belief of the earlier prophets that Yahweh judges other nations than Israel for their sins and passes sentence on them, though here we may sometimes be doubtful whether we have to do with anything more than spiteful indignation for injuries inflicted on the chosen people. Soon afterwards, however, the idea that Yahweh *judges the nations* is quite clearly present. And then it is no longer possible to escape the inference that there is a sense in which Yahweh is not the God of Israel only but the God of all the earth. Of course Israel is still Yahweh's own peculiar people. The reality and the exclusive nature of the covenant on Sinai is never for a moment doubted. Seven centuries later we find the most emancipated of all Hebrews still saying that "the Jew has much advantage every way, because unto him were committed the oracles of God." But Yahweh is no longer Israel's own peculiar God, for he rules all nations, and they all owe him allegiance.

Out of this dawning universalism there soon grows the novel notion that Yahweh is the Creator of all things. He who rules the hosts of all nations must also rule the hosts of the stars. His dwelling-place, which once was at Sinai, now becomes more commonly thought of as in the heavens; and this connection of the supreme object of religious worship with the sky marks a significant stage in the religious history of many nations. Then at last it comes to be said that in the beginning Yahweh made the world and all that is therein; the sun and moon and stars; every living thing; man himself.

It is easy to see how with this universalism there goes also a new individualism in religion; for both are alike the result of the increased inwardness of Israel's values. What matters now is not primarily Jewish blood and Israelitish supremacy, but *a good will*—"truth in the inward parts." And that, besides being a thing that men of any nation can strive after, is also an affair for the individual. Hence Yahweh is now no longer the nation's God merely, but the individual's God too. He is the guardian, not only of political and social, but also of individual values. "Yahweh trieth the heart!" He has an eye for character. Personal religion now makes its appearance among the Israelites. Each man begins to feel himself as an individual soul in the presence of the Most High.

But what now of the gods of the other nations? What of Chemosh and Astarte and Tammuz and Moloch and all the Baalim of other lands? That Israel must have nothing to do with them is clearly recognised; but in what relation do they stand to Yahweh, now that He is the God of all the earth? From a *practical* point of view the later prophets are clear enough in their answer. Practically speaking, these deities may be utterly ignored. They have no power at all as against the omnipotent Yahweh, nor can they do any sort of hurt to those who trust in Him. Yahweh's rule is universal, so that the 'gods many and lords many' of heathenism are mere 'vanities' or 'nothings,' 'no gods.' It is, however, difficult to say whether any of these expressions implies the denial of all reality to these beings. What is denied is not so much that they exist as that they are worthy of worship; and it seems likely that, stopping short of denying all reality to them, the pious Israelites gradually put them lower and lower in the scale of being until finally they are relegated to the infernal regions, where we may still meet them in the pages of Milton's epic.[1] However that may be—and it is, comparatively speaking, of minor importance—Israel had now reached the stage of *monotheism*, which is properly defined as the belief that all nations should serve the same God, Who alone is almighty and worthy of worship.

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[1] In 1882 Robertson Smith had already written that "even in the latest stages of Biblical thought the point of view which strictly identifies the heathen gods with the

How then are we to describe the impulse that led to this new development? What was it that inspired Israel's advance to monotheism? The answer is already before us. It was purely and entirely *her moral development*—a change in her ultimate values from what was outward and narrowly national to what was inward and therefore universal. It was because she now saw that the good of all nations was a common good that she came to believe that all nations must worship a common God.[1]

same continues — Digression toward monotheism

V

This may seem clear enough, and yet there has been so much misunderstanding as to what monotheism really is and as to the movement of thought leading up to it, that we shall do well to look into the matter more closely. There was a time when the more speculative interpretation of religion was so strongly entrenched in men's minds that even purely historical writers were apt to represent Israel's monotheism as arising from a growing metaphysical insight into the ultimate identity of all causes or even into the fundamental nature of the logical category of unity. On this view religious monotheism becomes the child of metaphysical monism. "The idea of God as the infinite principle of unity which is beyond all the differences of the finite, though implied in them all," is, according to Edward Caird, the force that ultimately disrupts polytheism.[2] As much as a generation ago, however, it was beginning to be pointed out by

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idols that represented them, and therefore denies to them all living reality, varies with another point of view which regards them as evil demons"; and had referred us to I Cor. 8 : 4 *et seq.* and 10 : 20 *et seq.* in proof of this. (*Prophets of Israel*, 2nd ed., p. 60.)

[1] In putting together the above very summary account of the development of Hebrew religion I have followed the leading recent authorities on the subject and have drawn freely (though not without some attempt to discriminate) from one or two convenient handbooks, such as those of R. L. Ottley, Karl Budde, and G. A. Barton, and R. A. Aytoun's *God in the Old Testament*. For that reason the usual footnote references have been omitted.

[2] *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. I, p. 252. *Cf.* Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. transl., vol. II, pp. 135 ff. *Cf.* also Miss M. D. Petre in the *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1926: "Polytheism is but the form which theism assumes in the mind in which *the unifying instinct* has not yet been developed." (Italics mine.)

Semitic scholars that Hebrew monotheism, if no other, seemed to have been based on grounds of a much more practical character. It was not, they began to hint, the pressure of any theoretical difficulties about a plurality of creators, but purely the ethical inadequacy of a god whose sympathies were narrower than righteousness, that led Israel to believe that their god was the God of all the world. Thus in 1895 we find the writer of a standard textbook of the history of religion insisting that the monotheism of the Hebrews was attained, "not as other monotheisms have been, by philosophical speculation, but by purely moral ways."[1] Before long, however, it came to be realised that what is true of Israel is true in exactly the same measure of the "other monotheisms" too. Equally among all peoples, the line of development which leads (through no matter what processes of syncratism, monolatry, and the monarchical subordination of many deities to one) to belief in the Divine Unity is now recognised to be essentially ethical or socio-political in character. M. Durkheim has shown this to be true even of those earliest beginnings of such a development which we find taking place among the Australian aborigines:

> "Neighbouring tribes of a similar civilization cannot fail to be in constant relations with each other. All sorts of circumstances give occasion for it: besides commerce, which is still rudimentary, there are marriages. . . . In the course of these meetings, men naturally become conscious of the moral relationship which unites them. They have the same social organisation, the same division into phratries, clans, and matrimonial classes. . . . Mutual loans and treaties result in reinforcing these spontaneous resemblances. The gods to whom these manifestly identical institutions were attached could hardly have remained distinct in their minds. . . . So if sacred beings are formed which are connected with no geographically determined society, that is not because they have an extra-social origin. It is because there are other groups above these geographically determined ones, whose contours are less clearly marked: they have no fixed frontiers. . . . The particular social life thus created tends to spread itself over an area with no definite limits. Naturally the mythological personages who correspond to it have the same character; their sphere of influence is not limited; they go beyond the particular tribes and their territory. *They are the great international gods.*"[2]

The doctrine of the Divine Unity is thus seen to be grounded, not in metaphysical monism, but in the conception of a Common Good, or the realisation of the international character of men's ultimate values. Of course many philosophers will hold that the admission of a Common Good is itself but one of the starting-points from which we are led by irresistible logic to the ultimate adoption of a monistic metaphysic; but however that may be, it is very certain that the Hebrews, not being metaphysicians, did not draw any such deduction. And in any case the important point is that, whether or not religious monotheism gives us ground for believing in metaphysical monism, it is as wrong in principle as anything could well be to suppose that the indebtedness could ever be the other way round. It is, as a matter of fact, expressly recorded of the founder of metaphysical monism that he said: "The world is full of gods."[1] His monism was so deep-rooted that it would allow him to admit only one chemical element, yet it did not hinder his admission of many objects of worship. And when belief in the Divine Unity did at last begin to show itself among his successors, it was, just as in Israel, rather in the form of a monarchical monolatry. "There is one god," says Xenophanes, "among gods and men the greatest, neither in form nor in thought like unto mortal men."[2] At a later date Socrates and Plato were profound believers in the unity of the Godhead, but it was only a unity of purpose and ethical principle, and not of absolute numerical identity.

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[1] Allan Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 192.

[2] *Elementary Forms*, Eng. transl., p. 426.

The tendency of Hegelian historians to put the cart before the horse in this matter, and to speak as if religious insight were the fruit of metaphysical generalisation, has again and again led them to represent moral and social progress as having been in the first instance conditioned by progress in religious belief, instead of *vice versa*. Here is an example from Edward Caird:

> "Religion . . . is always the consciousness . . . of a divine power as the principle of unity in a world, of which *we* are not only spectators but parts. . . . The idea of it, therefore, not only controls our view of objects in their relations to each other, but also our view of their relations to ourselves, and of our relations to them; and the most important of all the objects to which we stand in relation are our fellow-men. . . . Religion is the acknowledgment of a principle, in uniting himself to which, man

[1] Thales, Fragment 22 in Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*.

[2] Diels, *op. cit.*, *in loc.*, Fragment 15.

> is at the same time brought into alliance . . . with his fellow-men. . . . Man's relation to God is inevitably conceived as the ground of a social relation between himself and other beings like himself, which determines at once *their* practical obligations to *him* and *his* practical obligations to *them.* In this sense, then, we may say that, as is a man's religion, so is his morality. As he conceives of his relation to the power which determines his place in the world—and especially his place in relation to other men who with him are the members of one society—so also he conceives of the duty which he owes to them. . . . If the religion be naturalistic and objective, the morality will necessarily take the same form. . . ."[1]

Since we have already dealt at length with this question of the priority in the *ordo cognoscendi* of ethical to religious conceptions, we shall here content ourselves with quoting what one recent historical writer has to say about the early development of morality. "This whole development," says Professor G. F. Moore, "is independent of religion and its premisses. Religion did not create the idea of right and wrong nor of moral obligation; it did not generate conscience; nor did it contribute to the content of primitive morality anything but its own customs as part of the general *mores*."[2]

Meanwhile there is more that must be said. For not only is it now plain to us that the Hebrews did not reach monotheism by a metaphysical approach, but it is doubtful whether they can be held ever to have reached the kind of monotheism which would be interesting to a metaphysician at all. What they were anxious to affirm was not that the gods of other nations did not exist, but that they were not worthy of worship; and, as we have seen, it is possible that the nearest approach they ever made to denying their existence was to say that they were no gods but only demons. The growing recognition of this fact has led many recent writers to suggest that perhaps the Hebrews were not really monotheists after all, and that the religious importance of monotheistic belief is thus not so great as has usually been supposed. "The distinctive contribution of the Hebrews to religion is not the belief in one God," says Jastrow, for that belief "is, after all, a philosophical abstraction."[3] "The distinctive feature of the Jewish religion," Dean Inge writes in almost the same words, "is not, as is often supposed, its monotheism. Hebrew religion in its golden age was monolatry rather than monotheism . . ."[1] And Professor Gilbert Murray has suggested that the apparent indifference of the great Greek philosophers and tragedians to the question as to whether the gods were one or many —so that they seem "not to make any particular difference between *hoi theoi* and *ho theos* or *to theion*"—is a mark of depth rather than of shallowness in their thinking. "Certainly Greek monotheism," he says, "had it really carried the day, would have been a far more philosophic thing than the tribal and personal monotheism of the Hebrews."[2]

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[1] *Evolution of Religion,* vol. I, pp. 235–238.

[2] *The Birth and Growth of Religion* (1923), pp. 68–69.

[3] Jastrow, *The Study of Religion,* pp. 78, 122.

Nevertheless there seems reason to doubt the wisdom of these opinions. For the truth appears to be, not that the Hebrews were not monotheists, but that monotheism must be taken to mean something different from what has commonly been supposed. Historically speaking, monotheism has never stood for the belief that there exists in the universe only one spiritual being of a supernatural kind. If we so define it, we shall be faced with the necessity of admitting that it has never existed in the world. What monotheism has really stood for is rather the conviction that there is only one supernatural Being Who *counts as far as religion is concerned*—one Being, that is to say, Who is worthy of the name of *God*. To this belief the Hebrew prophets certainly did attain, and its importance as marking a forward step in religious history cannot easily be exaggerated."[3]

Perhaps, however, it should be added that the monotheism of the Hebrews is not quite so unique an historical phenomenon as has sometimes been supposed. Zoroastrianism is, at its best, essentially a monotheistic creed, for the belief in Ahriman, the evil power, does not really detract from its monotheistic character; and Judaism, too, had its Satan. Socrates and Plato were perhaps as truly monotheists at heart as any Israelitish prophet. The Greek dramatists did much to teach *ethical* monotheism, though they never arrived at what we might call a *numerical* monotheism. To the Stoic belief in the essential unity of God

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[1] *Outspoken Essays*, First Series, p. 215. *Cf.* also Irving King, *The Development of Religion*, pp. 271–275.

[2] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 90. We might instance also the statements of Dr. Lewis Farnell in his *Attributes of God*, pp. 79 ff.

[3] This does not mean that we are reducing monotheism to mere monolatry. Monolatry is a single nation's practice of worshipping only one god. Monotheism is the belief that all nations should worship the same god.

Christian theology owes not a little. Indeed it is no easy task to determine the measures in which our current Christian monotheism goes back to Hellenic and Hebraic sources respectively. Moreover we must not forget that in spite of the utter supremacy of Yahweh the Hebrew Heaven with its semi-divine angels and archangels was often even more populous than the Greek Olympus. The Hebrew underworld also, as we find it in the Apocalypses, was very parallel to that of Greek mythology. Nor did Hebrew monotheism ever succeed, any more than did the religion of the Greeks, in really ousting the animistic, polydaemonistic, outlook of early times. The Jews of Jesus' day were surrounded by at least as many demons as were their bedouin ancestors. Their superiority to their forefathers lay not in their having argued the multitude of demons out of existence—for that they had in no wise done—but in their having attained to the firm conviction that no demon could do any hurt to those who had put their trust in an Omnipotent Righteousness; and to that conviction the greatest of the Greeks also attained in their own way.

(Culminated) - Consummation in Christianity

VI

Our sketch of the development of the thought of God among the Hebrew people has so far taken us up to the age of the great prophets. It was not, however, in the prophetic teaching that that development reached its real culmination, but only in Christianity. Hence we cannot conclude our study without endeavoring to clear our minds as to the nature of the further advance for which Christianity stands. In putting this question we must not, of course, take it for granted that the superiority of Christianity, as represented by the Pauline or the Johannine Epistles to the religion of the prophetic period is due solely and entirely to the influence of Jesus; for there is no doubt that it is due in some considerable part to the gradual development of religious insight among the Jewish people as a whole during the long centuries that divided the appearance of the last of the great prophets from our Lord's advent. But at the same time it is true that there is no other single figure in the religious history of our race who so distinctively marks the inauguration of a new epoch as does He.

What was it then about Jesus' thought of God that was new and distinctive? The question has not always been answered in the same way. It has sometimes been suggested that the trouble with the religion of the Hebrews, and especially with that of Jesus' own contemporaries, was not that the ideas which Jesus emphasised were not contained in it, but rather that so many other ideas, persisting from earlier stages of the nation's religious development, were contained in it too. So it has been said, for instance, that "the remarkable fact is not that Jesus spoke of God as Father, but that apparently He never spoke of Him as anything else. He utterly ignored whole lists of names and titles of Jehovah which Jewish piety had accumulated."[1] On this view the service rendered to religion by Jesus is to be taken as having consisted primarily, not in the discovery of new gold, but rather in the separation of gold which was already in mankind's possession from that heavy admixture of dross which had hitherto rendered it too little available for use. That there is much truth in this view is not to be denied. Indeed it might be held that this (and not the *de novo* creation or discovery of something previously quite unknown) is the kind of service which the so-called 'original' genius of individual great men has most commonly rendered to humanity. Yet taken by itself, this view does something less than justice to the powers of the individual thinker and seeker, and in particular it does less than justice to the real newness of the religion of Christ.

Again, it has often (and increasingly in recent years) been urged by students of history that the real novelty of Christianity lay in the fact that it was in the teaching of Jesus and of Paul, and *not* in the religion of the prophetic period, nor yet in that of later Judaism, that a really effective monotheism and universalism first made its appearance. The great prophets, it is said, did indeed have in their possession the first principles of a universalistic outlook, but they did not carry them through to their last consequences; only Jesus and Paul did that. This view of the matter also has much in its favour. We have recognised the growing monotheism and universalism of Israel's outlook to be ultimately due to the increasing inwardness of her values, yet historians have always emphasised the fact that it was only in Christianity that such inwardness was understood in the deepest sense. "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter" was one of Jesus' most constantly repeated charges against the religious leaders of Israel in His day. "It has never been forgotten," writes a well-known historian of ethics, "that 'inwardness', rightness of heart or spirit, is the special and pre-eminent characteristic of Christian goodness."[1] Moreover it is plain to the most casual reader that those wider implications of universalism which lay at the root of St. Paul's missionary zeal are hardly more than hinted at in the highest flights of Old Testament prophecy. The doctrine that "he is a Jew, which is one inwardly"[2] first received adequate expression on the lips of a Christian. And the controversy concerning circumcision and uncircumcision, carrying with it the whole issue of Jewish exclusiveness, was very closely bound up with the birth of the new faith. In "the new man," writes St. Paul, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free"; "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."[3] "The hour cometh"—so the fourth Evangelist represents Jesus as saying under the shadow of the Samaritans' Mount Gerizim—"when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father . . . but in spirit and in truth."[4]

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[1] Canon O. C. Quick, *Liberalism, Modernism, and Tradition*, pp. 76–77; following C. W. Emmet.

Once again, the view has frequently been taken that the distinguishing mark of the Christian conception of God is not any changed content, but only the fact of its having received illustration and embodiment in the figure of Jesus. The Christian God, it is said, is the God of the Jews, but He is the God of the Jews now at last incarnate. "The distinctive feature in the Christian conception of God," writes a well-known theologian, "is the conviction that the character and purpose of God are Christlike . . . Thus it is not in any new teaching that we are to seek the distinctive Christian contribution to the thought of God, but in a living illustration of what the old teaching really meant."[5] That this view is profoundly right in respect of what it asserts is again not to be questioned. There is no doubt at all that the power of the Christian gospel has largely lain in the fact that its word of truth was made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. But we cannot believe that it is right in respect of what it denies. We cannot believe that the new Master was no more than a living illustration of the *old* teaching. The truth is surely rather that He was the incarnation of something definitely new—of that new thing which created Christian civilization. Moreover it is to be noted that the very fact of His being incarnate in a human personality implies a significantly changed conception of the Being so incarnate. The God of ancient Israel was a God Who *could* not have been revealed in the soul of a human peasant.

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[1] Henry Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 114. *Cf.* Seth, *Ethical Principles*, 5th ed., p. 335.

[2] Romans 2 : 29.

[3] Col. 3 : 10–11; Ga 3 : 28.

[4] John 4 : 21–23.

[5] Wm. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, pp. 87–88.

What then, in reality, is the new and forward step in our conception of the Divine for which Christianity stands? After all, the true answer is known to every Christian child: the distinctive Christian thought of God is that of an Heavenly Father Who saves us by His redeeming love.

That this is the conception of God which reigns supreme in the New Testament is not at all doubtful. It is the very heart of Paulinism. St. Paul, writes Dr. McGiffert, apparently thought of the name Father "as the peculiarly Christian name for God."[1] And what such Fatherhood implies is abundantly plain—it implies that God's dealings with us are determined in the last resort, not by justice and law, but by love and grace. The new teaching for which Christianity stood in the mind of St. Paul, and which led him to embrace it in preference even to the best contemporary Judaism, was nothing else than this—that God is not, in the last resort, a Judge Who, with a pair of moral scales in His hands, rewards men according to their deserts, but an affectionate and loving Father Who, out of His loving-kindness made manifest in Jesus Christ, is ever ready to extend His grace to those who, however undeserving, are willing to receive it in faith and with a humble heart. "No person," he writes, "will be acquitted in his sight on the score of obedience to law. . . . But now we have a righteousness of God disclosed apart from law altogether. . . . No distinctions are drawn. All have sinned, all have come short of the glory of God, but they are justified for nothing by his grace . . ."[2]

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[1] *The God of the Early Christians*, p. 24.

[2] Romans 3 : 20–24, Moffatt's translation. The passage goes on: ". . . through the ransom provided in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as the means of propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to demonstrate the justice of God

The question now arises whether this New Testament and Pauline conception of the essence of the Christian gospel can be held to go back to the historic Jesus Himself. A negative answer to this question has recently been given us by an important group of scholars, of whom the chief are Professors McGiffert, Lake and Foakes-Jackson. Professor McGiffert writes as follows:

> "Jesus' idea of God was wholly Jewish. At no point, so far as we can judge from the Synoptic Gospels, did he go beyond his people's thought about God. . . . So far as the God of the Christians is different from the God of the Jews, it is due not to Jesus' teaching about God, but to the teaching of Paul and those that came after, or still more to the personality of Jesus and the interpretation his followers put upon it."[1]

As against any such view, however, we feel obliged to assert that the distinctively Christian thought of God goes back in the completest possible way to the mind that was in Christ Jesus Himself. In substantiating this assertion we would point in the first instance to two considerations of a more or less *a priori* kind which Professor McGiffert appears entirely to neglect. To begin with, it seems clear that there is an initial presumption of the very strongest sort in favour of a correspondence between St. Paul and his Master as regards at least the central burden of their religious message. To deny such a correspondence is to find oneself confronted with a most paradoxical historical situation, and accordingly the *onus probandi* must lie very heavily indeed on those who make this denial. Now Professor McGiffert, as we saw above, allows that St. Paul apparently thought of the name Father as the peculiarly Christian name for God; but he does not seem to realise how strong an initial presumption this fact carries with it against his conclusion that "nothing could well be more erroneous" than the opinion that Jesus "went beyond his countrymen in emphasising the Fatherhood of God."[2] In the second place, however, there is a hardly less serious paradox contained in this learned scholar's assertion that the distinctively Christian view of God is due not to the teaching of Jesus, but rather to His personality. For there is no surer mark of greatness

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in view of the fact that sins previously committed during the time of God's forbearance had been passed over; it was to demonstrate his justice at the present epoch, showing that God is just himself and that he justifies man on the score of faith in Jesus." The meaning of these words is still involved in lively controversy.

[1] *The God of the Early Christians*, p. 21.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

in a teacher than an unusual measure of harmony between his teaching on the one hand and his own personality and practice on the other; and if there is one general impression rather than another which the Gospel narratives as a whole leave upon us, it is that in the case of Jesus this harmony is surpassingly perfect and complete. The personality of Jesus was revealed above all in His dealing with His neighbours, and, as has been well said, "Duty to God and duty to neighbour had already been familiar sounds in Jewish ears. But it was Jesus Who harmonized them so intimately that out of the two He produced 'not a third sound, but a star.' "[1]

Quite apart, however, from these more general and presumptive lines of evidence there is ground of the most solid sort for believing that the Pauline thought of God as being pre-eminently a loving Father Who gives and forgives freely, rather than a Judge Who rewards us according to our deserts, had its source in the mind of Christ. The ordinary reader of the Gospels finds it impossible to escape the impression that St. Paul's preference of the name of Father for God has its root in the usage of his Master. As has already been said, it is not so much the great frequency with which this name is applied that attracts our attention (though that alone is sufficiently impressive), but the disappearance of so many other names and styles and epithets—and especially the disappearance, to which Professor McGiffert himself calls attention,[2] of the epithet 'holy'—which were in general use at that period. What is important, however, is not the name, but the implications underlying the use of it. If we collect all the passages in which Jesus speaks of God as Father and ask ourselves what activities of God He is in each passage emphasising, we shall find that in general two activities are in question; and it is difficult to avoid the impression that these were precisely the divine activities which Jesus put in the forefront of His teaching as a whole, quite apart from the use of any particular name. The two activities are God's *care* and His *forgiveness.* Now it is, of course, very plain that the thought of God's care for His people had lain at the very heart of Hebrew religion from a very early period, and yet it is equally plain that not until the teaching of Jesus does this thought reach the full diapason of its expression. Indeed there is nothing in the whole literature of Divine Providence that can really compare with Jesus' words: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"[1]—to quote only one of many familiar sayings of the same general purport. And the advance seems to consist precisely in the fact that the doctrine of providence is lifted by Jesus out of the old context of a contract-relationship between Israel and Yahweh into the new context of a Divine-human Family in heaven and earth, which is to say the new context of the "Kingdom of God." Similarly it is certain that the forgiveness of God had for centuries been one of the great themes of Hebrew religious literature, reaching particularly noble expression in the hundred-and-third psalm: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Yet it will be allowed that this is not really the equivalent of the New Testament teaching: in the New Testament we learn something more than that God is *slow* to anger, that He will not *always* chide or keep His anger *for ever*: and also we learn that His mercy is not only shown "to those that fear Him," but that He is kind also to the unthankful and the evil, and merciful to the chief of sinners."[2]

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[1] Canon Quick, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 19–20. *Cf.* Moffatt, *The Theology of the Gospels*, pp. 99–101: "For Christianity the supreme title is that of 'Father.' Its distinctive meaning as the characteristic description of God in the gospels is further brought out by a comparison of the current Jewish titles which Jesus either ignored or used sparingly. . . . In any case, He does not speak of God as the Almighty. . . . A similar attitude characterises the teaching of Jesus with regard to the 'holiness' of God. . . . The fact that Jesus avoided this term accounts for its comparative rarity in the theology of the primitive Christians."

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[1] Luke 12 : 6–7.

[2] Dr. Montefiore, who writes from the standpoint of twentieth-century liberal Judaism, will allow us only this: "What the Jewish reader feels in reading the Gospels is no new doctrine as regards the divine fatherhood, but an old familiar doctrine in (very frequently, not always) a high degree of purity, warmth, and concentration." (*Some Elements in the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 93.) See, however, the other passages I quote below from the same writer.

The Pauline contrast of law and grace appears in the teaching of Jesus in the somewhat simpler form of a contrast between justice and love; and just as for Paul Christianity means primarily that God's attitude to us is determined not by the measure of our obedience to law but by the abundance of His own free grace, so there lies at the heart of Jesus' message the conviction that God deals with us not according to scrupulous and meticulous justice but according to uncalculating fatherly love. The contrast reaches its culminating expression in the three related parables of the fifteenth chapter of Luke, with their application:

> "I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

In the parable of the Prodigal Son the contrast is especially plain. In the elder son we see the old religion, with its thought of God as fair-minded distributive Justice, making its last protest against the new:

> "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

While in the father we see the new thought of God as redemptive Love:

> "And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

This same thought of God as being determined, in His dealings with men, by a love which breaks through all the barriers of justice, shines out again and again from the recorded words of Jesus:

> "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven*: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[1]

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[1] Matt. 5 : 44–48.

"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again . . . *and ye shall be the children of the Highest:* for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."[1]

"Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Dost thou look with envy, because I am generous? So the last shall be first, and the first last. . . ."[2]

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."[3]

Such words as these do seem, even when placed beside such a high product of Hebrew religion as the hundred-and-third psalm, to imply a really new orientation of ideas in the conception of God. It may be true that "what human language can express concerning the love of God for man we find already uttered in the Old Testament";[4] but it is nevertheless not until the New Testament—until Jesus and Paul and John—that love becomes the really dominating idea in the conception of the Divine. In the Old Testament the love of God appears rather as setting a limit to the stern exercise of His justice, and it is taught that

> " . . . earthly power doth then show likest God's,
> When mercy seasons justice."

But in the New Testament it is God's love that is supreme, and the justice of God appears at most as a thing that subserves the ends of His love. And so the Christian message comes in the end to this—that the spiritual universe is not a Law-court but a Father's House, and is controlled at its centre, not by a compensatory system of justice, but by redeeming love.[5]

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[1] Luke 6 : 35–36.

[2] Matt. 20 : 13–16. One phrase is from Moffatt's translation.

[3] Luke 7 : 41–43. [4] Wm. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 84.

[5] Dr. Montefiore would undoubtedly say that we have made far too much of the difference between the Old Testament teaching and the teaching of Jesus in this matter, but he admits, I think, the *essential* justice of the contrast we have drawn. "The kingdom itself," he writes in one place, ". . . is not so much a reward as a grace. Do what he will, man never deserves it; do his duty as much as he may, man has no claim for special recognition and reward. The kingdom, when it comes, will be far greater and more glorious than man can have merited. It is not the product of cal-

Such then, in brief,[1] appears to be the new insight into the character of God for which the Christian teaching stands. Can we now attempt to say what it was that inspired this final stage in the development we have been tracing? How was Jesus led to this highest thought of God? And what kind of justification had He to offer for it? Let it not be thought that in putting this question we are in any wise presuming to pry into the mystery of a secret experience; for Jesus Christ would have been the last to ask His followers merely to take His word for it that God was their Father; and all His statements in the matter, far from having the appearance of communications of esoterically received information, are of a definitely reasoned character.

The answer is not difficult. The secret of our Lord's insight is the universal secret of all religious insight: it is simply that His thought of God kept pace with His thought of human life. It was because He had a great new thing to say about how men should live with one another here below that He had this great new thing to say about what God above was like. He had made discovery of a new moral value—and He applied it to His faith in God. And, as we have already suggested, His great significance as marking an historical epoch is due to this above all else: that, whereas the application of a new value to the sphere of religion has usually been found to lag behind its discovery in the sphere of human relationships, so that the same historical figure has seldom been responsible for both insights, Jesus seems to have been responsible in quite equal measure both for the new light upon life and for the new thought of God to which it led.

What then is the new light which Jesus has to throw upon life? The principle of it is best summed up in the New Testament word *agapē,* which means brotherly love. A very large part of what He says about conduct may be gathered up into the counsel to face *all* situations arising out of our relations to our fellows in the spirit, not of justice, but of brotherly love.

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culating justice and retribution; it is the outflow of God's free and exuberant love. I do not think that these few statements go beyond what Jesus actually says in the Synoptic Gospels, and I am also inclined to think that, though they are not without their parallels in the Rabbinic literature, they nevertheless may be regarded as comparatively new and original." (*Some Elements in the Religious Teaching of Jesus,* pp. 97–98.)

[1] For a much fuller discussion of the matter I may be allowed to refer to my book, *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul,* pp. 172–204.

If we push our enquiry one stage further back and ask where it was that our Lord discovered the principle of *agapē*, the answer again lies very near to the surface. He had discovered it in *the life of the family*. The Gospel narratives very clearly show how dear family life was to Him. It was there that the daily round of existence in these little Eastern towns in which His days were passed seemed to Him to reach its highest worth. Of all the modest store of deeds and words and purposes which that existence had to show, those that were most as music in the heart of Christ were very largely drawn from the intimate household circle and were the fruit of natural affection—the self-sacrifice of parents for their children's welfare, a father's uncalculating forgiveness of his son, a mother's tenderness towards the child of her womb, the generosity of brother towards brother. And His thought seems to have been: If only we could all live as a family lives, as brothers live! If only we could manage our relations with all those with whom we have to do as we manage our relations with the inner circle of our loved ones! If only we could for ever put aside all the miserable, loveless machinery of distributive and retributive justice which we have invented for dealing with those outside the inner circle, and try the way of *agapē*! For indeed it might be held that the true rendering of *agapē* is not love (which is also English for *erōs*), but brotherliness; and that the Christian spirit is to be defined above all as "the spirit of brotherliness"—rather as that, perhaps, than as "the doctrine of the brotherhood of man," which may have other shades and strands of meaning.

We now see plainly that the new thought of God to which the gospel of Jesus leads us is nothing else than an application to the eternal world of the secret thus discovered in the sphere of human relationships. The life of the family, He would say, provides us not only with the pattern by which our own actions should be guided, but also with our surest clue to the nature of the Most High God. Not only is *agapē* the chiefest principle by which we must order our dealings with our fellows, not only is it true, as St. Paul afterwards said, that "the greatest thing of all is *agapē*"; but also "God is *agapē*." For *agapē* can mean more than brotherliness, it can also mean fatherliness; and the ethical spirit of brotherliness has its natural and inevitable counterpart in the religious belief in the Divine fatherliness; or, if any prefer it, the brotherhood of man has its counterpart in the fatherhood of God.

Accordingly Jesus' endeavours to lead His contemporaries to the higher thought of God always take the form of an *argumentum a fortiori*, a "How much more . . ." His major premiss is the assumption that we must think of God in the light of what is best in our human experience, and as being yet better: His minor premiss is that what is best in our human experience (our 'highest social value,' as our modern jargon would have it) is *agapē.*

> "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, evil as ye are, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"[1]
>
> "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven . . . forgive us our debts, as [even] we ourselves have forgiven our debtors."[2]

Many of the parables present the same line of reasoning and appeal, especially the great parables of the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke—the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son; and it is particularly worthy of note that these latter, though apparently called forth in the first place in order to justify Jesus' own ethical practice (because "the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them"),[3] were nevertheless in the end applied by Him rather in justification of His teaching about God ("I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance").[4] Here again the argument is that if even a shepherd, even the best of human fathers, even we ourselves when we are at our best, allow our love to break through every restricting circumstance, how much more must God!

We must now, however, endeavour to penetrate somewhat more deeply into the meaning of this Christian love, both as the ideal for humanity and as the essence of Divinity. It should be clear from all we have said that such love is no complacent senti-

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[1] Matt. 7 : 9–11.
[2] Matt. 6 : 9, 12. The rendering of the last clause is Dr. Moffatt's.
[3] Luke 15 : 2.
[4] Luke 15 : 7; *cf.* also v. 10.

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mentality, no easy emotionalism, but stands from first to last for an arduous redemptive enterprise. *Agapē* is, of its very nature, *redemptive* love, love that goes out to seek the lost. The significance of the new contribution which Jesus at this point makes to our understanding both of our human duty to our fellows and of the divine dealings with ourselves has again and again been cordially admitted, and indeed insisted on, by that learned Jewish scholar, Dr. Claude Montefiore. In this place we must content ourselves with setting down a few sentences from only one of his books:

> "The Rabbis attached no less value to repentance than Jesus. They sang its praises and its efficacy in a thousand tones. They, too, urged that God cared more for the repentant than for the just who had never yielded to sin. They, too, welcomed the sinner in his repentance. But to *seek out* the sinner, and, instead of avoiding the bad companion, to choose him as your friend in order to work his moral redemption, this was, I fancy, something new in the religious history of Israel. . . . It was, doubtless, often a daring method; even with Jesus it may not always have been successful. But it inaugurated a new idea: the idea of redemption, the idea of giving a fresh object of love and interest to the sinner, and so freeing him from sin. The rescue and deliverance of the sinner through pity and love and personal service—the work and the method seem both alike due to the teacher of Nazareth."[1]

"It inaugurated a new idea: the idea of redemption"—these words, though coming from a Jew, represent the Christian claim in its highest form.

So we are led up to what is the deepest of all the aspects of Christian love. For the enterprise of redemption is an enterprise which involves not only arduous labour but also suffering and self-sacrifice and, it may even be, the surrender of life itself.

> "And there went great multitudes with him; and he turned, and said unto them,
>
> If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.
>
> And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."[2]

Here, too, we have Dr. Montefiore's magnanimous acknowledgment of a real deepening of all previous teaching at this point:

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[1] *Some Elements*, pp. 57–58. I have quoted similar passages from two other writings of Montefiore's in my *Roots of Religion*, p. 177.

[2] Luke 14 : 25–27.

> "Here it is where Jesus, though not by any means un-Jewish, yet seems to strike a new, a hitherto unheard-of note. And one does seem to find in certain aspects of Christian self-sacrifice, though not always wisely applied, original manifestations of high moral capacity, which go back to, and proceed from, the trumpet-call of the Christian faith. Active renunciation, full self-sacrifice for the sake of the Master, and in the cause of truth, of succour, of compassion. This sort of heroic well-doing and heroic self-sacrifice does seem to me characteristic of some Christian morality, even as the injunction and the ideal from which it springs were originally due to the teacher of Nazareth."[1]

There is a certain amount of evidence that, as the time of His own death approached, our Lord became more and more convinced of its inner necessity and, more generally, of the necessity which is laid upon all true and deep love to pass through the valley of the shadow of death for the sake of its beloved. Redemption, He came more and more to see, can only be by way of the last renunciation. This idea receives constant stress in the Johannine interpretation of the mind of Jesus. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[2] "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."[3] But it is also present in such Synoptic sayings as: "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many";[4] and "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"[5]

Now it is the crowning excellence of the Christian teaching that this profoundest insight into the implications of the redeeming activity of human love is taken up also into the thought of the redemptive love of God. The divine Love is a love that redeems through suffering. And here we come upon a consideration which marks the topmost "height of this great argument."

For we may well hold it doubtful whether all that our Lord said, by way of explicit and spoken teaching, about loving one another and putting our trust in God's love towards us, and especially about the redemptive and suffering aspect of love both human and divine, would have really sufficed to inaugurate a new era in the world's religious history, had it not been for the immense reinforcement which His words received from His own character and practice, from the story of His life, and above all from the great spectacle of His death. Though it is indeed true that, even as regards the spoken word alone, Christ must be regarded as the greatest of this world's teachers, a far wider audience than the officers of the Sanhedrim and the Judaean crowd having now testified to it that "never man spake like this man,"[1] yet discerning historians have always felt that it is not only, or even mainly, as a teacher that He has influenced the development of human religion. It is not what He *said* about redeeming love, about *agapē* human or divine, that has been the vitalising power behind the Christian tradition, so much as the redeeming love, at once divine and human, that was incarnate in Himself and made manifest in His habit of life and, superlatively, in the manner of His going to His death. This is plainly true of the New Testament period, as may already be seen from the letters of St. Paul (where so much more is made of what Jesus *was*, and of what God was in Him, than of any words that He spoke); and it is no less plainly true of the Christian orthodoxy of later days. We must indeed be careful (as has already been argued) not to represent this fact as if there were any discrepancy between the two sides of our Lord's significance, between His teaching about God on the one hand and His shewing-forth of God in His own living and dying on the other. The point to be insisted on is rather the very reverse—that the two are in unique harmony with one another, and that it is to its perfect realisation and incarnation in the Life that the Teaching owes the main part of its power. But it remains true that historical Christianity, taken as a whole, has always seemed to centre itself, not in any doctrine (even as set forth by the Master Himself) *about* the redeeming love of God, but rather in the direct display of it in the events of the Master's own career.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 107.
[2] John 14 : 13.
[3] John 12 : 24.
[4] Mark 10 : 45.
[5] Luke 12 : 50.

The fact which here comes to our notice is indeed far from being an isolated one in the spiritual history of mankind. One of the most distinguished modern students of religion has gone so far as to claim that "the whole history of religion proves that the Word must always become flesh in order to gain admission to the human heart."[2] So it has often been pointed out, for instance, that the real "Light of Asia" is Gautama Buddha himself, his character and life, rather than his doctrine; and that the greatest spiritual asset of that mighty ethical system which, emanating from the Stoa, became the rule of life of all the great men of the Roman empire—and indeed the greatest spiritual asset of Greek philosophical ethics as a whole—was its ability to point back to the concrete example of the life, and above all of the death, of Socrates, and to what the Stoic writers called his "Socratic strength."[1] But all would admit that this supersession of mere doctrine by incarnate example reaches its climax in the Christian religion.

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[1] John 7: 45.

[2] Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, vol. II, p. 254.

Thus it is in the Cross of Christ that the development we have been tracing reaches its culmination and meets its fulfilment. It is the Cross of Christ that has persuaded men not only that redemptive love is the highest secret of noble living but that it lies enshrined at the centre of the universe in the heart of God.

"Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the springs of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates

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[1] The phrase "Σωκρατικῆς ἴσχυος" is ascribed to Antisthenes the Cynic by Diogenes Laertes, VII, 11. With what I have said above compare J. H. Muirhead in the composite volume, *Christianity and the Present Moral Unrest* (1926), pp. 28–29: "This was true even of the Greek philosophic ethics with which in the above the Christian has been compared. It drew its life not from the Stoic logic but from the great example of 'the strength of Socrates.' So too it has been in the East. It is Gautama Buddha, not the Sankhya philosophy, that is the 'Light of Asia.'" *Cf.* also G. F. Barbour on p. 123 of the same volume: "Christian and Greek ethics both begin with the life of a historic character. . . ."

From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
  Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory."[1]

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[1] Shelley, *Prometheus, ad fin.*

CHAPTER X

THE IDEA OF REVELATION

I

The Problem Defined).

Religion is essentially a relation between two terms, or more exactly, a communion between two personal existences, the human soul and God. We who are men stand at the human end of this relationship, and therefore it is natural and proper that our study of it should be undertaken from that end too. Our endeavour in the present enquiry has accordingly been to describe the realities of religion in the true order of our human knowledge of them. Thus we have been led to find the foundation of all our spiritual experience in our discrimination of right from wrong and good from evil, and its cope-stone in our trust in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have represented the whole process as one of progressive *discovery,* and have found its guiding principle to be faith; such faith and discovery being essentially activities of the human soul.

But if religion does genuinely stand for a dual relationship, a real communion, it must involve activity on God's part as well as on man's; and to this activity on God's part there will correspond an element of passivity on ours. Religion cannot all be a giving, but must also be a receiving. And thus in our human consciousness of the Divine, so far as it includes this passive and receptive element, there must be contained the seeds of a real knowledge of the nature of that divine activity which makes the give-and-take of religion possible.

Therefore it is that the reflection of our race has never contented itself with describing the religious relationship merely as it appears on its manward side, but has always gone on to some kind of representation of its Godward aspect too. To our human activity of faith there has always seemed to correspond a divine activity of *grace;* and to our human activity of discovery a divine activity of self-disclosure which has been given the name of *Revelation.*

It goes without saying that our understanding of the nature and course of this divine activity of self-disclosure can only be of a very limited and piece-meal kind, dependent as it is on our own ability to receive the proffered revelation. Such a sacred history as is contained in the Old Testament scriptures has sometimes been described as "history written from God's point of view." But the phrase is far too bold. One day perhaps it may, as St. Paul believed, be given unto us thus "to understand, as all along we ourselves have been understood," but "at present we know only bit by bit."[1] All that a human pen can ever write is the history, not of God's self-disclosing activity, but of our human readiness to profit by it. Yet even when this is granted, it still remains true that the manner of the divine self-revealing is not altogether a closed secret to us, and that accordingly we are largely able to distinguish between right and wrong ways of conceiving it. To do this will be the business of our final chapter.

History of the idea of divine revelation in relation to that of human discovery.

II

The best preface to what we have ourselves to say concerning the idea of revelation will be a short *résumé* of its very fateful history.

If we penetrate as far back into the beginnings of human religion as our present knowledge is able to carry us, we find that in those far-off days the final referendum in all matters of faith and practice was the mass of tribal tradition which was handed down from one generation to another and accepted by each in turn, piously and without question. No less firmly than it was, long afterwards, believed in the Western World that "*Roma locuta, causa finita est,*" has it been believed by every people in the infancy of its social development that, if tradition had anything to say about any point at issue, its word was final. The old Greek proverb that "the ancient faith of our fathers is good enough for us"[2] well represents an attitude which once was world-wide. The trouble was, however, that there were many questions concerning which the tribal tradition could not, in the nature of the case, have anything to say. It could yield only general knowledge—

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[1] I Cor. 13 : 12, 9; Moffatt's translation.

[2] ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις.

broad religious principles, as we should now call them—which presented the general outline of tribal duty and disclosed in a general way the will of the gods. But primitive man often finds it urgently needful to have particular knowledge of the will of God too. He wants to know what his own particular destiny is, whether his crops will thrive or fail, whom it is God's will that he should choose as his chief or king, whether it be God's will that he should go to war against his enemy, and whether, if he go to war, he will prevail against him. Now it is the universal belief of primitive races that there are means by which such knowledge may be directly ascertained from the gods. As a brilliant popular amateur of anthropological enquiry wrote two thousand years ago, "So far as I know, there is no nation, however polished and educated, or however brutal and barbarous, which does not believe that warnings of future events are given, and may be understood and announced by certain persons."[1] Cicero's word for this way of obtaining knowledge is the word we still use—'divination.' With the great variety of methods of divination that have been practised in the world we need not here concern ourselves in any detailed way, but it is once more to Cicero that we owe the most important suggestion towards a classification of them—though, as a matter of fact, it is certain that that master-borrower was here following the lost masterpiece *Concerning Divination* of Posidonius of Rhodes. Fundamentally, he says, there are two kinds of divination. The first is *artificial* (or technical, *artificiosa*) divination, which requires trained skill in the interpretation of the *signs* which the gods provide. Well-known examples, which are common to a large number of peoples, are the sortilege or drawing of lots, the augury or observation of the flights and cries of birds, and haruspication or examination of the markings on the entrails of sacrificial animals. The other is *natural* divination, so called because in it the divine message is directly made clear to the mind of the medium, so that little or no art of interpretation is required. The communication is sometimes made during sleep, but more often during a waking state of ecstasy or frenzy in which the active powers of the mind are supposed to give way to a condition of pure receptivity. The person to whom, or through whom, the message is given is said to be *inspired*. This is the whole doctrine of revelation and inspiration as it appears among savage tribes.

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[1] Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I, 1.

The next stage comes when men begin to reflect upon the origin of their tribal tradition and the source of its authority. It seems that when culture arrives at a certain point, all peoples begin to ask, 'Whence came the knowledge of the gods which our tribe possesses? And what guarantee have we that all our fathers taught us about the gods is true?' So far as our knowledge goes, the first answer that is given to this question is everywhere the same. It consists in applying the doctrine of divination—and especially the doctrine of *natural* divination or inspiration—to the origin of the tribal (or national) tradition. Just as the gods still make known their will in regard to a particular event by revealing it to an inspired *mantis* or prophet, so (it is now said) they long ago gave to our people the whole body of our tribal tradition by revealing it to the great inspired men of our race, who received it in ecstasy or in sleep. This is, in every corner of the world, the earliest theory—if indeed it be right to call by the name of theory a view-point that is earlier than the earliest science properly so-called—of religious knowledge.

The final step comes with the invention of writing. The first extensive use made of this invention is usually, if not always, the scriptural preservation of the tribal or national traditions. For a considerable (though varying) time after the traditions are thus committed to writing, no separate inspiration is attributed to the scribes nor are the pages they have written regarded with any special veneration. Before many generations have passed, however, a special sacred value comes to be attributed to the writings themselves. The unwritten traditions behind the written record gradually grow dim in the racial memory, and instead of these, the record itself now becomes the norm of faith and practice. So in almost every case the belief tends to arise that the *writers* were themselves inspired, and that, instead of merely making record of an older tribal memory, they themselves received the direct revelation of the content of their books from God. Thus we arrive at the conception of an *inspired book*.

This whole doctrine whose evolution we have been tracing is as integral a part of human religion as any that can be named. As regards its main outlines at least, the earliest stages of it are capable of being illustrated from the history of every known people, and the later stages from the history of every people that has developed the required degree of reflectiveness and has profited by the invention of writing. Yet it must be allowed that the later stages of the development hardly display the same measure of uniformity as do the earlier ones. The Vedic religion, the religion of ancient Persia, Judaism and Islam present very much the same features; but the religion of the Greeks and Romans never developed in quite the same way; and the religion of China has also been held to form something of an exception to the normal rule of progress.

For the further development of thought on this whole matter of the source and nature of religious knowledge we are, of course, indebted to a single people and to those who have been influenced by them. In the Greece of the sixth century B. C. there arose that habit of thinking things out in a determined and systematic way which we call science, and the origin and nature of the religious tradition was naturally enough one of the main problems to the solution of which the new methods of reflection were applied. What the Greeks did was virtually to put aside the idea of revelation altogether and to seek out a solution of a wholly different kind. The characteristic note is struck by Xenophanes in his famous couplet (written perhaps about the end of the sixth century):

"The gods have not revealed all things to men from the beginning,
But by searching they gradually discover what is better."[1]

Here discovery on man's part is definitely substituted for revelation on God's. Xenophanes, indeed, if we are to believe Cicero, "utterly denied the efficacy of divination" of every kind, but we have the same authority for saying that in this he remained quite alone among Greek scientists until we come, many centuries later, to Epicurus and Carneades.[2] What was usually denied was not the reality of divination, but the possibility of explaining religious knowledge as a whole by reference to it. The truth about the gods, it was now said, was not suddenly revealed to old-time seers in dream or frenzy; but men slowly and calmly thought it out for themselves, and science may now help us to repeat the process both more expeditiously and with a better-founded confidence. Different thinkers had different views as to the precise nature of the scientific grounds on which religious belief may thus be held to rest, but the earliest view of all really gained the mastery in the end. The earliest thinkers—those of the Milesian school—were interested chiefly in the explanation of the external world and their quest was for what they called its *physis* (Latin, *natura*), which meant the unitary principle underlying the changing forms of its development. Hence, when they were confronted with the religious problem, their summary solution of it was to identify God with this *physis* or nature. The philosophy of Socrates, and to a less degree that of Plato, stood for some sort of protest against this general view, but it was revived by Socrates' own disciple Antisthenes who thought to solve the ethical problem by defining virtue as "a life in accordance with *physis*." At the feet of Antisthenes sat Crates, and at the feet of Crates sat Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school. So it came about that 'nature' was the leading concept in the Stoic theory of religious knowledge.

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[1] Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, p. 49, Fragment 18.

[2] Cicero, *De Divinatione*, I, 3.

In early times the problem of religious knowledge had been immensely simplified by the fact that men's attention was largely confined to the religion of their own city-state. The Stoics, on the other hand, were the earliest philosophic school to be really cosmopolitan in outlook, as indeed they were the inventors of the word 'cosmopolitan.'[1] They were therefore definitely faced with the problem presented by the vast and confusing diversity of the religious systems current in different states, and the difficulty of the problem was further accentuated by the fact that their own scientific theology—which identified God with Nature—stood in fundamental contrast to the religions actually current in *all* states. They settled the matter by making a distinction between 'the religion of nature'—to which their own philosophy led them—and 'the religions of states (*poleis*)'; more briefly, between 'natural' and 'political' religion. Moreover, since the Stoic creed turned on the identification of Nature both with Reason (*logos*) and with Law (*nomos*), a distinction had to be made between the 'Law of Nature and Reason' on the one hand and the large variety of laws laid down (*theseis*, Latin *posita*) by the different states on the other. Thus arose the antithesis of natural and positive law and with it also that of natural and positive (which is thus another term for political) religion. The Stoics teach that natural religion is at the disposal of all mankind, being based mainly on conceptions *innate* in ourselves but also partly on reflection upon the course of nature as a whole; whereas the political or positive religions are purely relative in character and have (so far as they go beyond the tenets of natural religion) no deeper basis or sanction than that which accrues to them from the fact that they are the established religions of particular states. This theory of religion soon became the dominant one in the Græco-Roman world and so remained until classical antiquity gave way to Christian influence.

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[1] Unless Diogenes the Cynic may be said to have already invented it when he declared that "the only true state (πολιτεία) is that of the world (τῆν ἐν κόσμῳ)."

The next stage in the historic process was initiated, not by the Greeks, but by representatives of the Semitic religions who had come under Greek influence. These men went to school in cities of greater Greece where the Stoic influence was paramount, and they had little choice but to accept the distinction between natural and positive religion which the Stoics had worked out, and which was now part of the common mental equipment of all educated men. But there was one thing that, as ardent believers in the exclusive supremacy of their own religion, they could not do—they could not think of their own faith as being merely political or positive (*i. e.*, posited by the legal enactment of a *polis*) in character. Hence, so far as their own faith was concerned, they replaced the distinction of natural and positive by that of natural and 'revealed' religion; their teaching being that whereas what the Stoics called 'the light of nature' was enough to make known to all men such general truths about God as appeared in systematic form in the Stoic creed, only the light of a special revelation could initiate men into the higher mysteries of the particular faith to which they professed adherence. It is perhaps in the writings of Philo Judæus that we first find this view clearly expressed, but a good example of it which will suffice for our present purpose is to be found in the writings of St. Paul. In the *Epistle to the Romans* St. Paul, making use of the technical Greek vocabulary of the Stoic schools, writes as follows:

> "For when Gentile nations who have not the Law [*i.e.*, the Torah of Moses], yet do by nature (*physei*) the things of the Law, they, though having no Law, are a law unto themselves; and such men shew the work of the Law written in their hearts[1]; their conscience[2] also bearing witness to it, and their reasonings accusing or defending them among themselves. . . . What is the Jew's advantage then? . . . This, to begin with, that to them were entrusted the oracles (*logia*) of God."[3]

In this way the conception of revelation comes back into the main stream of theological thought, where it now stands side by side with the conception of nature. And for fifteen hundred years the two conceptions are found living peaceably together. We cannot here attempt to trace the various stages through which their relation to one another passed, but can take time only to notice the general principle guiding men's thought of that relation, viz., that natural religion carries us a certain way, and that for the rest we must have recourse to revelation. The only matter in dispute was where exactly the line was to be drawn, and something like a final settlement on this point was reached in the thirteenth century when St. Thomas Aquinas laid it down that natural theology could reach to the unity of God, whereas only revealed theology could introduce us to His Trinity or His incarnation in Jesus Christ. This view remained unchallenged until after the Renaissance; so that we find even Lord Bacon laying it down in his *Advancement of Learning* that the light of nature "sufficeth to convince atheism, but not to inform religion." It may be added that exactly parallel developments to these Christian ones took place within all the other Semitic religions which came in contact with Greek philosophy, and that very similar conclusions were in the end arrived at. This is a statement that could be illustrated from the Islamic theology of the Middle Ages, from the Jewish thought of the same period, from the history of the secret cults of Syria, and doubtless also from other quarters.

Although influences leading to the break-up of this mediæval synthesis can be traced as far back as the Italian Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, it was not until about the middle of the seventeenth century that it began to be the object of really serious attack. The attack took the form of a gradually growing tendency to rely more and more on the light of nature and less and less on the light of revelation. In England this movement of thought begins in a definite way with Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Veritate,* and is carried on through Locke and the whole Deistic movement to its culmination in David Hume. In continental Europe it begins with the Cartesian school and Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,* and is carried on through Voltaire and the French *Philosophes* to its culmination in the *Aufklärung*. We may perhaps sum up the characteristic contention of this whole *sæculum rationalisticum* by saying that it holds the light of nature alone to be sufficient for our religious guidance, so that the Christian revelation adds nothing to the religion of nature, but is merely a "republication" of it for the benefit of those whose innate consciousness of it has for one reason or another become dim, or who are not sufficiently learned to reason it out for themselves. If it be asked what exactly is meant by this 'light of nature,' the answer is the same as would have been given at any time during the preceding fifteen hundred years or more—partly certain *intuitive* or self-evident religious beliefs such as were insisted upon by the Stoics, and partly certain *discursive* proofs based on scientific and metaphysical speculation, like those suggested by Plato and Aristotle. Generally speaking, it may be said that the modern reader feels little doubt as to the complete effectiveness of the eighteenth-century demolition of the mediæval synthesis, and as little confidence in the ultra-rationalistic view that was at the same time set up in its place.[1]

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[1] The favourite Stoic phrase to describe the κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, or innate ideas.

[2] Another purely Stoic term.

[3] Romans 2 : 14–15; 3 :1–2.

The final stage, though once more prepared for by a variety of earlier influences, did not really arrive until the nineteenth century was about to dawn. Of many names which might be mentioned in this connection the two most important are those which have so fully engaged our attention throughout this work, viz., Kant and Schleiermacher; while in the English-speaking world the earliest important name is perhaps that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. What is characteristic of this new period is that in it the distinction between natural and revealed religion is definitely transcended. The light of nature and the light of revelation are seen to be, not two separate facts, but different sides of the same fact; not two separate avenues to the knowledge of God, but two ways of regarding the only avenue there is. To Schleiermacher there is no distinction whatever between natural and revealed religion, and it is important to note that the two old conceptions are brought together, not by one remaining unchanged and the other being absorbed into it, but by *both* suffering radical criticism. Kant and Schleiermacher no more put their trust in a knowledge of God reached by cosmological speculation than they do in an inerrant tradition or scripture dropped straight from the hand of God into the hand of man. In their different ways they are each convinced that the only argument capable of reaching Deity is one that starts not from external but from human nature; and they believe too that it is in human nature, and not in its abeyance in trance or dream or frenzy, that God characteristically reveals Himself. Hence in their pages neither the light of reason and nature nor that of revelation and inspiration appears in its old form; but, in such form as they do appear, they are one and the same light. The time-honoured settlement according to which man discovers *some* things about God by his own "unaided reason," whereas *others* he must passively accept as authoritatively communicated revelation, is now quite disrupted; it is believed rather that on the one hand an entirely unaided reason can discover nothing about God at all, while on the other hand it is only to the keen and patient seeker that any aid from Heaven ever comes.

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[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 73–75.

The whole history of thought on this matter may thus be roughly divided into five periods as follows:

I. *Revelation Alone*—in the early days.
II. *Nature Alone*—in Greek philosophy.
III. *Nature and Revelation in Harmony Side by Side*—during the Early and Middle Christian Ages.
IV. *Nature and Revelation in Conflict*—during the latter half of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century.
V. *The Opposition of Nature and Revelation Transcended*—since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

How and when does God reveal himself

III

What we have learned, then, is that human discovery and divine revelation, instead of dividing the field of religious knowledge between them, hold the whole field of it in common and are but complementary sides of the self-same fact of experience. The entire process by which men become aware of God may be described in terms of human seeking and finding, and we have done our best so to describe it. But it can be described in terms of divine self-disclosure too, and indeed must be so described if the full truth about it is to be told; although, as has been said, our human power to describe it from this divine end must ever be of the most limited kind.

What is here asserted is that every human discovery of God or of religious truth may be regarded under the correlative aspect of a divine revelation. Some recent writers have seemed to go further and to assert that *all* human knowledge, no matter in what field, may equally be regarded in this double way. "Discovery and revelation," we are told, "are two aspects of the same process," so that "all truth is both discovered and revealed."[1] This way of speaking, however, runs the risk of taking all meaning out of the idea of revelation. To say that God reveals Himself cannot mean merely that He exists to be known or that He is always there for men to discover if they can. His self-disclosure must mean something more active than this. Moreover, from this view of the matter it would follow that the greater part of revelation is not concerned with God at all, but with such things as human history, the ways of nature, and the properties of number and of geometrical figure; for it cannot properly be claimed that all knowledge is knowledge of God. What might, possibly, be claimed to be true is that in all knowledge there is present, at least potentially, an element of something like religious insight and therefore of divine revelation, or, as Plato would put it, that nothing is worthy to be called *epistēmē* which does not in some degree participate in the Form of the Good. But from this it does not follow that in so far as our knowledge is of the nature of discovery, to that extent it is also of the nature of revelation, and hence that all knowledge is equally of the nature of revelation; the truth being rather that while none of our knowledge stands wholly unrelated to God's self-disclosure of Himself to our souls, yet that knowledge which we regard as being specifically religious possesses the character of revelation in an altogether different degree from the rest.[1]

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[1] W. R. Matthews, *The Idea of Revelation* (1923), pp. 30–31. *Cf.* L. Hodgson, *The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetics*, p. 46: "Reason and revelation are correlative terms, denoting not contrasted methods of arriving at truth, but two complementary elements in all attainment of truth."

What then is the logical basis of this distinction? In what sense can our conviction that (let us say) our souls will survive death be said to possess the character of revelation in an altogether different degree from our conviction that (let us say) a total eclipse of the sun will, if the sky be clear, be visible from Greenwich on such and such a day in the far-distant future?

If we are to have any light on this question, we must first address ourselves to the wider and prior question as to where in our human experience we do actually find God revealed.

In what ways does God reveal Himself to us? Through what media, in what signs, by what manifestations, does He make known to man His nature and His will? That God has left Himself entirely without witness in His world mankind has (as we saw) never been able to believe, and every religious system has accordingly taken it for granted that divination of some kind is possible. Serious difference of opinion arises only in regard to the nature of this witness and the authentic methods of this divination, and it is here that a real progress of thought can be traced. The line of advance may be said to be twofold. In the first place, we notice a progress from the outward to the inward. In the earlier stages of religious development men look for God mainly in external nature, and think to find some declaration of His will in the flight of birds or in the disposition of the stars.

> "The negro going out of his hut one morning strikes his foot against a peculiarly-shaped stone . . . and recognises the presence of a guardian and a helper. The Samoan watches the behaviour of a spinning cocoanut, or the flight of a bird to right and left. The Central Asiatic notes the cracks on a tortoise's shell, much as a modern palmist traces the lines in a human hand. The liver is selected as the special seat of the prophetic faculty, and Babylonian and Etruscan developed a common diagnosis of

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[1] "We feel instinctively that there is far more Discovery in science and far more Revelation in religion."—H. R. Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative* (1921), p. 46.

its marks. The Celt divined by the water of wells, or the smoke and flames of ascending fires, and slew his prisoners that the secrets of destiny might be discovered in their entrails."[1]

But as such 'artificial' divination recedes more and more into the background and the main reliance comes to be placed on 'natural' divination by way of dream or trance or frenzy or cataleptic fit, a real advance is registered; for now God is held to reveal His nature and His will, not by external omens and portents, but through the spirit of man. Nevertheless, another stadium of progress still remains to be traversed—the progress from the abnormal to the normal. The tendency to look to the abnormalities and anomalies of human experience for the traces of the Divine is common to both forms of divination in their earlier stages. In the case of 'artificial' divination it comes out in the attention paid to strange and unusual phenomena like comets and eclipses and unexplained events and coincidences of every kind, while in the case of 'natural' divination it comes out in the almost exclusive concentration upon such experiences and conditions of the soul as are now generally held to be psychopathic in character. What we have now learned is to look for manifestations of the Divine, not in the occasional disturbances and obscurations of our human nature, but rather in the fullest daylight of its reasonable and healthy exercise.

Our conclusion accordingly is that it is in *man* that God reveals Himself most fully and that the most veridical clue to His mind and will are to be found; in man, moreover, when he is at his manliest and best. "He made man in his own image"—there, if they had only realised it, lay the secret which the diviners and the augurs and the soothsayers made the object of their ancient quest.

Yet we must try to give our meaning something of a sharper definition than this. For it might well be asked: "Is not this the maddest and most groundless of all megalomanias, that a particular animal species inhabiting a comparatively insignificant planet should find in its own specific nature the key to the nature of the Eternal Being?" And our answer to that question can only be that it is not in our own specific animal nature (not in our nature as vertebrates or as mammals or as bipeds, nor yet in the particular bundle of instincts which mark us off from our nearest brutish relatives, nor in what the old moralists called "the particular constitution of human nature") that we find the footprints of Divinity, but only in our nature as moral personalities. So once again we find ourselves led to our old conclusion, that it is in our human values that we find God revealed. Not in the procession of the stars, not in the flight of birds, not in the guttural frenzy of the Delphic maid, but in "the milk of human kindness" is the character of God made plain and His will made known. Not in the sound of thunder but in the voice of conscience do we hear Him speak most plainly. Not in hepatoscopic markings, nor yet on tables of stone, but on the tables of the human heart, are His words most plainly to be deciphered. As it has been finely put, "God speaks to us through ourselves. It is through our values and obedience to them that we attain to knowledge of Him" and "He is to be seen in the light of a cottage window as well as in the sun or the stars."[1]

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[1] J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 177–178.

But the question may still be pressed why, instead of resting content with the ordinary language of discovery, we should, in speaking of this insight that comes to us through our values, feel it necessary to resort to the new category of revelation. The answer must begin from the consideration that our values are felt by us from the very beginning to be not really *ours* at all, but to belong to a wider order of reality of which (as Plato would say) we are privileged to "partake." Goodness is not in the first place something that exists in us, but rather something to which we feel ourselves called, something which makes an active claim upon us. Many efforts have indeed been made to put us off with a purely 'naturalistic' theory of value—a theory, that is to say, which would entirely explain our moral consciousness in terms of our animal ancestry or as a product of its antecedents in our own animal nature. But such explanations have always seemed to succeed only in proportion as they have lost sight of the deepest and most characteristic elements in the thing to be explained. It is of course undeniable that our consciousness of moral obligation and of the Good to which we are obliged to conform has an evolutionary history behind it, and there may even be a carefully guarded sense in which it is allowable to speak of it as having been "developed from prior elements that are themselves of a non-moral kind." Yet to speak of evolution and development in such a case as this is in no sense to offer an explanation, but only to set a problem; and it is a problem which, as has been widely felt by earnest students of the subject, can never hope to find its real solution in any reference to antecedent and simpler elements. Our human experience of value, in short, cannot be understood in the light of anything that lies behind us, secured in the storehouse of the past; but only by a forward reference to something that lies ahead of us and beckons to us from above. We have here to do, fundamentally, not with an edifice built up from earthy foundations by human skill and creativity, but much rather with the progressive disclosure to our obedient minds of a higher order of reality. In the experience of moral obligation there is contained and given the knowledge, not only of a Beyond, but of a Beyond that is in some sort actively striving to make itself known to us and to claim us for its own. This conclusion is not a mere guess, nor a leap in the dark, nor a poetic hyperbole, but an honest drawing-out of what we find to be implied in the felt imperativeness of duty.

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[1] A. Clutton-Brock, *Studies in Christianity*, pp. 16, 152.

The general contention that our awareness of value cannot be explained in terms of its more earthy antecedents but only as a progressive participation in a higher world of being whose organising principle is the Good, goes back to the teaching of Plato, and forms indeed the central thought of his Theory of Ideas as well as the esoteric meaning of his famous Myth of Recollection. In our own day it has had few more notable champions than Rudolf Eucken, who throughout his long life and voluminous writings seemed always to be saying only one thing—that we do not make our values but they make us, that in our gradually developing awareness of them we are not building from below but rather grasping at something that is suspended from above, and that consequently we have here to do with nothing less than "the invasion of our life by a new Order of reality."[1] We may quote at random:

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[1] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, Eng. transl., p. 15.

"The movement to spirituality cannot be considered as a work of any separate individual faculties of the mere man; but it is a movement of the All, which certainly in our position needs our co-operation, but which, at the same time, takes us unto itself and makes of us something quite different from what we were at the first view of things."[1]

"The True and the Good are not mere means and instruments of our welfare: to treat them thus is to destroy them at their root. They are rather the revealers of a new and nobler life, of a new world, participation in which is the crucial mark of distinction between man and animal, or rather between the spiritual and the animal in our own nature—our unique position being, in fact, due to our participation as spiritual beings in this higher life. . . . It [*i.e.*, this life] cannot possibly be a mere product of human reflection. Its forms and powers are far too unique to be in any way derivable from us."[2]

We can now understand why the world's great men of faith should always have represented their acquisition of religious insight as having its deepest origin, not in any activity of their own spirits, but rather in the activity of that greater Spirit Who was seeking to make Himself known. The real initiative in the whole matter lies not with man but with God, and before there is faith on our part there is grace on His. We may indeed go so far as to say, with St. Augustine, that faith itself is not an act but a gift; yet here it is necessary to speak very carefully and with delicate discrimination of the different factors involved. On the one hand it is certain that faith in God cannot be attained without an eager activity of search on the part of our own minds, but on the other hand it appears to be no less true that this eagerness must be largely of the nature of an eagerness to *receive*, and that a spirit too restlessly striving may easily overreach itself; nor is this the only walk of life in which men may fail in their quest by trying too hard. It is all put admirably by Baron von Hügel when he writes that "man attains in religion, as truly as elsewhere—once given his whole-hearted striving—in proportion as he seeks not too directly, not feverishly and strainingly, but in a largely subconscious, waiting, genial, expansive, endlessly patient sunny manner. This is indeed the 'gütliche nicht grimmige Ernst' of the great German mediæval mystics."[3]

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[1] *The Truth of Religion*, Eng. transl., p. 160.

[2] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, Eng. transl., pp. 8–9.

[3] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, Second Series, p. 60. *Cf.* generally, H. R. Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative*, chap. II

But now there is a last point to which attention must be drawn. Our initial conclusion was that it is in man that God most truly reveals Himself. Then we went on to argue that it is not in man as a particular animal species that this revelation appears, but rather in those values which themselves belong to a higher world, yet of which man is privileged in some measure to partake. We must now, however, return from this further and more abstract analysis to the concreteness of our former statement. For value is in its very nature a concrete and personal thing which cannot exist in the emptiness of mere thought or conception at all, but only as it is incarnate in living spirits. No point has been more stressed in the thinking of our own age concerning divine revelation than that it is God Himself who is revealed to us and not mere truths or doctrines about Him—the divine self-disclosure always taking the form not of communication but of communion; and from this it may be taken to follow that the disclosure is made, at least in the first instance, not through books but through men.[1] There is no doubt a sense in which the men here in question must be our individual selves, for no man can have any knowledge of God and the invisible world save as he hears God's voice speaking directly to him in his own conscience. At the same time, we shall all be ready to acknowledge that those manifestations of value which have done most to lighten our darkness are such as have been found, not in ourselves, but in other and better men, and that it is through our spiritual contacts with these others that our highest revelations of the Divine have always been mediated to us. As John Scotus Erigena so nobly has it, "*quanta fuerit sanctarum animarum multiplicatio, tanta erit divinarum theophaniarum possessio*"—"there are as many theophanies as there are saintly souls."[2] In none of us, perhaps, is the image of God wholly defaced or His voice wholly silenced, yet there is not one of us who does not of his own experience know how the presence of a saintlier character in our midst may lead us both to a more steadfast assurance of God's reality and to a fuller understanding of His mind and will. Many of us would say that we know of no argument for the reality of the spiritual world that can compare for persuasive power with the remembrance of this and that saint of God whom we have been privileged to know. Such men put our scepticism to shame. In their presence doubt becomes a disloyalty and unbelief a betrayal. "A character can never be refuted."[1] It is very noteworthy that even a philosophy like Bergson's finds its culmination in this conception of revelation through personality. In his Huxley Lecture on "Life and Consciousness" there are the following very remarkable words:

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[1] The idea that God has revealed Himself to man primarily through books is an invention of the pundits, not of the prophets. God is in books only because He was in the men behind the books. An inspired book means properly a book written by an inspired man.

[2] *De Divisione Naturæ*, I, 8.

> "The men of moral grandeur, particularly those whose inventive and simple heroism has opened new paths to virtue, are revealers of metaphysical truth. Although they are the culminating point of evolution, yet they are nearest the source and they enable us to perceive the impulsion which comes from the deep. It is in studying these great lives, in striving to experience sympathetically what they experience, that we may penetrate by an act of intuition to the life-principle itself. To pierce the mystery of the deep it is sometimes necessary to regard the heights. It is earth's hidden fire which appears at the summit of the volcano."[2]

From the countless particular testimonies which might be drawn upon in illustration of this principle we must here make a single random choice. Of Frederick Denison Maurice it has been said:

> "He lived as few men have ever lived in the Divine. He was, as Mr. Gladstone has said of him, applying words from Dante, 'a spiritual splendour.' The Divine embraced him. He did not need to strive after it like most men. It was the Alpha and Omega of all his being—the only reality, in comparison with which all other things were shadowy. It is this more than anything that made him the spiritual power that he was. In the presence of Maurice it was hardly possible to doubt of a Divine sphere,—of a spiritual life. While the commercial world by its selfishness was denying God, and the religious world by its slanders degrading Him, and the scientific world by its theories hiding Him from view, or proclaiming Him unknown, there was a reality in Maurice's faith that left no room for doubt. I know of no life, with all the intellectual puzzles which it presents, so intensely and powerfully Divine."[3]

It is assuredly in the light of such familiar experiences as these that the ancient history of revelation is to be understood by us. The Hebrew people, looking back upon their marvellous past, could not but see in it a progressive activity of self-disclosure on the part of the divine Being Who, though making Himself known to the nation as a whole rather than to any particular class within it, had yet used the nation's great men as His particular instruments or vessels. The successive stages in this self-disclosure were marked in the people's minds by the memory of certain great men of faith—Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest. When they thought of these men, they did not boast of what their nation had produced; but rather gave thanks for what their nation had received. To their believing eyes the whole story was even more a record of divine love and guidance than it was a record of human achievement. They deeply felt that behind it all was the hand of God.

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[1] Dean Inge in *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 72.

[2] *Mind-Energy*, Eng. transl., Amer. ed., p. 32.

[3] Principal Tulloch in his *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 298.

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ
Our Lord.

IV

And the culminating chapter in this history cannot be better summed up than in the words of an old writer whose name we do not know: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by a Son."[1] What men had felt about Moses and the Prophets they felt in a still more compelling and definitive way about Jesus Christ. They felt that He had revealed to them the very face of the Most High. Here at length, they said, was the very "portrait of the invisible God."[2] As they looked into the soul of this Man, they felt that they knew at last what God was like. From time immemorial men had been seeking a clue; the diviners and augurs and soothsayers had made many a fruitless guess, followed many a false trail; yet the clue, when now at last it is discovered, turns out to be of a strange simplicity and homeliness—it is the soul of a Man. This great climax of a world's seeking is perfectly symbolized in the story of the Magi, wherein the Wise Men of the East who have nightly scanned the heavens and daily read the auspices for a sign or hint of Heaven's meaning, are guided at last by a star to a village stable wherein a peasant woman is

[1] Heb. 1 : 1–2; ἐν υἱῷ, "by a Son."

[2] Col. 1 : 15.

giving birth to a peasant child—and there their long quest ends. They no longer look to the stars or to the auspices for a revelation of God, nor to any of the old omens or oracles. They know now that He is manifest in human flesh. Divination is still possible, but by a different sign.

Here then lies the deep meaning of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. If we would know what God is like, it is to a *Man* that we must turn—"the man Christ Jesus." If we would know where in our experience the divine Spirit most unmistakably manifests His presence, this is the answer: 'In the voice of conscience wherein His law is written in our hearts, in His Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are His children, in deeds of love and mercy and heroic self-sacrifice, in the souls of good men wherein such things as these are most manifest to our eyes, and supremely and finally in the soul of Jesus Christ wherein they all shine with a new and matchless radiance.' It is the witness of all who have come under the spell of His spiritual presence that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and that he who hath seen Him hath seen the Father.[1]

The truth we have here to grasp is that the highest human goodness, since it is the real meeting-point of earth and heaven, may be regarded from either of two points of view; it may be thought of as man reaching upwards or as God bending downwards. It is noteworthy that the New Testament writers, though making use of the widest variety of thought-forms and modes of expression, are nevertheless all agreed in regarding their Master from *both* points of view. To them all He is the greatest and the best of men, marking the summit of human attainment and of human insight into the things of God; but to them all, also, He is God's greatest gift to man, marking the climax of the divine self-disclosure. In Him our human aspiration joins hands with God's condescension. And so, for all their joy in Him as One perfectly obedient to His Heavenly Father's will, the prevailing note in all their speech concerning Him is not pride in something accomplished, but gratitude for something received. In the life and death of the Man of Nazareth St. Paul indeed sees "one man's obedience,"[2] but he sees also the seal and proof of the love of the Most High God. "God proves his love for us by this, that

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[1] *Cf.* II Cor. 5 : 19; John 14 : 9.

[2] Romans 5 : 19.

Christ died for us."[1] "In Christ God reconciled the world to himself, instead of counting men's trespasses against them."[2] And the response aroused in the hearts of the New Testament writers as a whole finds perfect expression in the words of the Johannine author. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us . . ."[3] "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son . . ."[4] "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son . . ."[5] The Cross, this writer would tell us, is indeed the crowning incident in the history of our fitful human quest of the Divine, but it is also, and even more significantly, the crowning incident in the history of God's age-long quest of the human heart.

Thus it is that Jesus Christ has always seemed to stand in a twofold relation to His Church's life. He is the greatest of her saints, but He is also her Lord. In Him man was made perfect: in Him God was made manifest. To the Church He has always been at once the Son of Man and the Son of God; not indeed as though He had a dual personality, and was sometimes God and sometimes man,[6] but rather in the sense in which a modern poet addresses Him:

> "Jesus, divinest when Thou most art man!"[7]

To some indeed it has in all good faith appeared that the Christian Church, in insisting (as it has always done so firmly) on the divinity of Christ, has been following a wholly false scent; and they would urge us to content ourselves with regarding our Master as the incarnation not of divine but of human perfection. That there is much in the barren and artificial logomachies of ecclesiastical Christology to excuse such a revolt we very readily allow; but after all *securus iudicat orbis terrarum*. It is not likely that on so cardinal an issue as this the instinct of nineteen centuries will turn out to have been wholly wrong. Nor is it difficult to see where it has been profoundly right and wise. The doctrine of our Lord's divinity is based on the perception which came long ago to the Galilean villagers and fisherfolk that, while Jesus was in one regard but a man like themselves seeking God, yet somehow also in His words to them and His deeds and presence among them God was seeking man; a perception which after His death on the Cross deepened itself into the realisation that not merely had one man triumphed, but high Heaven had spoken.

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[1] Romans 5 : 8.
[2] II Cor. 5 : 19.
[3] I John 4 : 9.
[4] I John 4 : 10.
[5] John 3 : 16.
[6] *Cf.* H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 293–297, for a criticism of this view.
[7] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul.*

Regarded in this light, and as the culmination of the long history of divination, the doctrine of our Lord's divinity is surely expressive of the profoundest religious truth. It alienates us only when it is interpreted in such a manner as to obscure its organic connection with the history of revelation as a whole. The true Christian teaching has never been that God is incarnate in Jesus alone, but that in Him He was incarnate supremely. Revelation and incarnation are no unique historical prodigies but are, by God's grace, of the very warp and woof of our human experience. The God who speaks to us in Jesus Christ is the same God Who already had spoken, and Who still continues to speak, "at sundry times and in divers manners." "The Christian doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus," says von Hügel, ". . . is undoubtedly true and deeply enriching. Yet it can be wisely maintained by us only if we simultaneously remember that, however truly God revealed Himself with supreme fulness and in a unique manner in Jesus Christ, yet this same God had not left Himself, still does not leave Himself, without *some* witness to Himself throughout the ages before Christ, and throughout the countries, groups, and even individual souls whom the message, the fact, of the historic Jesus has never reached, or who, in sheer good faith, cannot understand, cannot see Him as He really is."[1]

"Where love is, there God is." Where there is any love at all, He is not wholly absent; but where love is perfected, there He is altogether revealed. In moments of little faith, we may be haunted with the feeling that our religion is but a one-sided trafficking with an unresponsive God Who makes no sign to show He hears or cares, and Who is never directly present to our experience at all. "No man," we say, "hath seen God at any time." And then, perhaps, we remember how the sacred text continues: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."[1] For it is not merely that through our values we reach God or that from them we infer Him, but rather that in them we find Him. Love is not merely an outward mark and symbol of His presence, but is His very self in action in our world. And in the soul of the Man of Nazareth, and in His life and death, wherein our world's highest values are embodied and love for us made perfect, it was no mere dim-descried shadow of an otherwise masked and inscrutable Deity that we saw and knew but, as His Church has always believed, very God of very God.

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[1] *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, First Series, p. 134. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting a similar passage from Professor Pringle-Pattison. " 'This fair universe,' says Carlyle, in the famous chapter in *Sartor Resartus* on Natural Supernaturalism, 'is in very deed the star-domed city of God; through every star, through every grass blade, *and most through every living soul*, the glory of a present God still beams.' 'Man,' he quotes elsewhere from Chrysostom, 'Man is the true Shekinah'—the visible presence, that is to say, of the divine. We are far too apt to limit and mechanize the great doctrine of the Incarnation which forms the centre of the Christian faith. Whatever else it may mean, it means at least this—that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine. 'God manifest in the flesh' is a more profound philosophical truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and, for the greater glory of God, declares Him unknowable." (*The Idea of God*, pp. 156–157.)

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[1] I John 4 : 16.]

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